













THE  
PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM  
OF GREAT BRITAIN

*A Report on its present  
condition with proposals  
for post-war reorganization*

THE LIBRARY ASSOCIATION  
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## INTRODUCTION

It may sound cynical to say that this report is a piece of opportunism, but such is the case. The idea of a realistic examination of the public library service and its needs is not a new one. The Survey of 1936-7 was a beginning. Those who planned that survey had hoped that the descriptive accounts of various districts would be followed by an intensive study of the different phases of library work—that a series of committees, armed with the very considerable material gathered during the Survey and supplementing this as proved necessary, would be able to issue detailed constructive reports affording guidance and stimulating better standards of service. The work was commenced. For example, one committee devoted much time and thought to proposed improvements in library legislation. But the period following the Survey was overshadowed by the controversy created by attempts to secure internal reforms. While the L.A. was still arguing fruitlessly about its constitution and its educational syllabus, to the neglect of other more important considerations for which these internal reforms would have paved the way, the war came and to many it seemed then that discussion of any forward policy for librarianship must await better, more leisurely times. The war brought its own problems and difficulties which had to be faced both by the members individually and by the Council and the Emergency Committee in succession.

But, once we were able to settle down to the normality of war, such as it is, two inescapable facts emerged. One was that war-time conditions demonstrated, as never before, the essential value of the library service. Libraries did not become less but more important. The other was that however destructive war might unfortunately prove in many respects, it was dominantly a constructive force—at least that we had to view it as such if we were to maintain the will to win. We were and are fighting not merely to retain or regain the things we *had*, but to earn the opportunity for the better things that we hope to secure after the war, things not only or largely material but things also of the mind and of the spirit. Since, then, we fight not for “a world fit for heroes” but one fit for ordinary people to live in freely and fully, we find our inspiration and our justification in the idea not of reconstruction alone but of revivification. The immediate and invaluable result of this attitude of mind is that we are, as a nation, not content with hoping for a better post-war world; we feel that it is urgently necessary to plan now for that future. This impulse has been evidenced in all phases of life. Doctors, scientists, educationists, administrators, economists—all have turned their attention to post-war programmes. The need has never been forgotten by this Association. Occasionally a critic would suggest that this was not the time, but to most of us it was only too clear that this *was* the time, and that if we waited until after the war we should be too late. Events will move rapidly when peace comes. The post-war period will present grave problems. If the opportunities are not to be lost, as many of them were after the last war, the utmost vision and foresight is demanded. Added to this is the fact that libraries themselves will be necessary elements in the reconstruction of most other things; people then will need, more than ever, the services libraries can give. If libraries are not themselves speedily put upon a sound basis they will fail in their duty to a reconstructing society. The critics also murmured that we cannot now guess what will be the circumstances of the immediate post-war world. That may be true. On the other hand, however, the fundamental values and conditions of librarianship will remain and if its organization is sound, and if its philosophy is well founded and widely accepted, it can better adapt itself to these post-war circumstances

than if it remains ill-organized and uncertain as to its responsibilities and opportunities.

The future of librarianship must, of course, rest as always in the hands of every member of the profession and of library authorities. Planning alone is not enough. The plans must be implemented and this is a task not for a committee or an Association, but for every individual. Nevertheless the duty of exploring the field and giving concrete expression to a programme is one that can, and indeed must, be delegated to a few. Having prepared such a programme they can present it for the consideration of members at large. If these then accept it, librarianship can move forward united. Until such a programme is presented the aspirations of the individual members will remain unco-ordinated, lacking in direction and largely ineffective.

Satisfied that it was their duty to attempt the preparation of such a programme the members of the Emergency Committee of the Library Association were exercised as to how the task could be undertaken. Conditions have been such as to compel them to adopt a method which I myself certainly regard as far from ideal. The normal course would have been to set up a strong representative committee which would have taken evidence—much on the lines of the 1924 Public Libraries Committee. This seemed quite impracticable; all potential members of such a committee were men and women with war-time duties too pressing to permit of regular attendance. Moreover, unless the committee had engaged in a considerable amount of "field work" their findings might well have suffered from the same defect as the Report. This, for all its many virtues, has at times a strange unreality, due largely to its reliance upon statistics and statements as distinct from first-hand knowledge.

Wisely or unwisely it is obviously not for me to say, the Emergency Committee decided to take an opportunity that presented itself for attaining at least a preliminary investigation. The results are embodied in this report.

The opportunity arose in this way. As is known to members, early in the war the L.A. had endeavoured with some success to organize the transfer of books for children from evacuation to reception areas; it also sought, with some if very slight success, to secure grants for this purpose from Government funds. Among the many war-time matters that came forward were a few requests for assistance, made by overpressed reception authorities. These also were received by the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust, which sought the advice of the Library Association, as it was clear that the war-time needs of local authorities were closely related not only to their pre-war standards but also to their present abilities to serve; moreover, it was by no means clear that it was either practicable for the Trust to give such help or legitimately within its province to do so. The Emergency Committee, while keenly desirous to be of service not only to the Trust, which has long been so valuable a factor in library development, but also to the libraries concerned, felt that without a thorough investigation of conditions in general it could not wisely make any recommendations. It felt also that such an investigation would provide much of the first-hand information needed for the consideration of a post-war policy. In this view it was later strengthened by requests, from one of the Branches and from several members, that such a programme should be prepared. Consequently it decided to ask me to devote six months to a study of war-time conditions and post-war possibilities. The Council of the City of Westminster was asked to release me from my duties as City Librarian for that period, a request to which they most generously agreed. I would express here my deep personal gratitude for this. Whatever benefit others may or may not gain from my survey and report, I know that I myself have gained a great deal—a better understanding of librarianship and everything for which it stands, an enhanced faith in its potentialities and, above all, the help and friendship of very many of my colleagues.

The Carnegie United Kingdom Trust has added another to the many debts

that librarianship owes that body by defraying the cost of this investigation. Here I would make the position of the Trust quite clear. Its primary interest in the undertaking is that the Emergency Committee should report to it regarding war-time problems. It would be wrong to say that the Trust is not interested in the wider post-war aspects of the report, because the Trust is, fortunately for us, interested in every aspect of librarianship. But in this particular case its help must not be taken to imply either that this report has been written at its behest or that the Trust is contemplating any policy of assistance to library authorities on the lines of its previous benefactions or otherwise. It has, in brief, enabled the Association to carry out an investigation of war-time problems and permitted it at the same time to utilize the information thus gained for a wider and different, if related, project. For the general investigation and post-war programme the Library Association is alone responsible.

For the actual report here presented, however, I would make it clear that I alone am responsible. This is a personal report, incorporating the impressions and views of one man; it is not the joint work of the Emergency Committee or any other committee of the Library Association and unless and until it receives approval it has no "official" status. Whether, and to what extent, the Association will in fact endorse the views and support the recommendations of the report is entirely a matter for the Association itself to determine.

The time available has not been sufficient for me to make as extensive a survey as I would have wished or, when writing my report, to have any aim other than that of saying bluntly what I had to say. So I can only envy and not emulate the polished, lucid style of the Report. None the less I am satisfied in my own mind that I could not have arrived at any conclusions essentially different from those I here present no matter how long I had devoted to the task; otherwise I would not state them. The deficiencies and needs of the library service are too obvious to leave any honest and informed person in doubt. The reforms suggested are all matters to which our attention had been given long before this present survey was undertaken.

I have, however, endeavoured to see and hear as much as I could. The work has fallen into two stages—the exploratory stage and the preparation of the report. Readers may care to know the general principles upon which I worked.

In the exploratory stage I sought (*a*) to study and restudy the material available at the Library Association's Information Department, including the replies to the questionnaires we issued to all libraries last June, (*b*) to see a cross section of urban and county libraries of differing types, (*c*) to meet a number of librarians working in different fields and under varying conditions and discuss with them their views on their own work in particular and on librarianship in general, and (*d*) to invite communications on any germane matters from any members who were willing thus to help me—and many responded. In addition, the Association organized a series of meetings, one in every Branch area in England and Wales, and one in a convenient centre in each of the regions not served by Branches. At all these meetings the frank and constructive discussions, to which all present were able to contribute, proved both stimulating and helpful. I also had the privilege of attending a meeting of the Council of the Scottish Library Association.

When arranging my visits to libraries I tried not to be guided by any preconceived notions; I did not "select" places because I thought they were good or bad or interesting. Instead, I planned a series of journeys which would take me into different parts of the country and saw whatever places I could *en route* or within access of some centre at which I stayed for perhaps three or four days. In certain small areas I saw every, or practically every, public library of whatever size or kind. Wherever I went—excepting in some of the larger places with which I was already not unfamiliar—I saw every department, and often every branch. In the counties I paid much attention to branches and centres—not only to



headquarters. A large part of most days I spent with librarians, either in their own premises or travelling from place to place—and we “talked libraries” from all angles. Altogether I saw something of some 130 library systems and visited about 350 central and branch libraries and service points. This strenuous programme was only made possible by the kindness, consideration and practical assistance of every librarian I met. This is literally true. I did not meet one librarian who did not extend me every friendship, nor one who was not completely frank and helpful. Whatever questions I asked, whatever I sought to see, I was happy to find that my task was viewed not with suspicion or lack of interest, but as an honest attempt to discover the truth and to co-ordinate the views of the whole profession. These colleagues—some old friends, others to whom I went as a stranger—will never know how deeply I appreciate their share in this joint task or how their collaboration brought home to me my own responsibility to do what justice I could to their united faith in the future of librarianship.

In writing the report I have observed three principles: Firstly, I have tried to be completely realistic; I have described things as I saw them; I have not evaded the unpleasant nor sought to magnify it. I have assumed that this is a report for librarians and library authorities who have neither need nor desire for window-dressing. I think that more would have blamed me if I had tried to compromise, evade or gloss over deficiencies than will censure me because I have said some harsh things. Secondly, I have taken the view that my primary duty was that of propounding a policy for libraries in which the needs and conditions of the service itself received prior consideration. That is to say I have not been influenced by all the “ifs and ans” and ancillary conditions which may or may not arise to influence our future. The doubting Thomases have reminded me that there may be changes in local government, in education, in the rating system, in this, that and the other. If I had tried to frame a policy which heeded all these unknown and unknowable elements I should have got nowhere. Instead I have stated, as well as I may, what we want as librarians for libraries, though I have, I believe, provided a scheme sufficiently based upon essentials to be adaptable, without serious sacrifice, to whatever circumstances may arise. Thirdly, I have prepared a fairly complete scheme, worked out in considerable detail. For this I have two reasons, which to me seem most important. A recent writer suggests that those who prepare schemes for after-the-war library work “would do well to confine themselves to a few cardinal principles”. I disagree. By all means let us discover and assert these principles. They remain theoretical, academic and fruitless unless we can show in detail how they can be implemented and what precisely their implementation involves in organization, administration, personnel and service. Then, surely we want to clear the decks for action. This report is not meant as a statement of principles or a descriptive account or a collection of pious hopes. It is intended as the first tentative blue print upon which construction can be based. If our members approve, here is a clear-cut scheme upon which we can at once proceed; if they desire modifications, here are the basic resolutions to which amendments can be received. If they disapprove someone will have to set to work again and try and find a more acceptable set of concrete proposals—and the quashing of my proposals will at least tell my successor where not to tread—if we are to avoid merely sitting in conference discussing general principles until the next war comes.

Somehow, however, I feel that, subject perhaps to modifications, our members *will* approve. I have talked with so many, young and old, and I know how they are thinking.

Yet, even if they approve, the work is but begun. We shall at least then know exactly what we want. Every individual member will have to help to the utmost, and with a loyalty which overcomes dislike of detail by faith in essentials, if we are then to get it. One thing is certain—only a united, loyal and active

association can build a better future for librarianship, whatever form that future may take.

May I here express my thanks and gratitude to all those who have helped me in this work and made it possible for me to undertake it: The Westminster City Council for granting me leave of absence, Mr. Counc. C. P. Russell, Chairman of the Westminster City Council's Emergency Committee, and Sir Parker Morris, Town Clerk, for their encouragement and help; Mr. W. S. Haugh, Deputy Librarian of Westminster, who has performed all my normal duties in my absence so ably that I have felt really "free"; The Carnegie United Kingdom Trust for its financial assistance and for granting me access to much valuable information, and Mr. J. Wilkie, its Secretary, for invaluable advice on a wide variety of matters; and to the members of the Emergency Committee of the Library Association not only because they entrusted me with the responsibility but for the way in which they have made it clear that they wished me to say my say without fear or favour.

I am indebted also to all those colleagues who have helped me, by showing me their libraries, telling me their thoughts and ideals, sending me information and invaluable memoranda. I would like to mention them by name, but they are too numerous; apart from that, since I have to criticize some of their libraries—but never their own endeavours—it would be unfair and unwise to provide too detailed an indication of the places I have visited. I would, however, like to thank one member in particular—Mr. W. B. Paton, Hon. Secretary of the Scottish Library Association, who arranged every detail regarding my most interesting visit to Scotland.

Above all I would thank Mr. P. S. J. Welsford, Secretary of the Library Association, and Mr. D. C. Henrik Jones, its Librarian. Both these gentlemen have played a considerable and arduous part throughout. With them I have discussed most things in this report—and many more that are not. I have made full use of their ideas and their wide knowledge of British librarianship and I have been unsparing in my demands upon their time and energies. I could not have written the report without their constant, unstinted help. They have helped me to collate and check all my data. If I say that they are not "responsible" for any of the ideas incorporated in these pages I mean that for these only I myself can accept responsibility, but if the work and thought and enthusiasm that have gone to its making were to be justly apportioned they should be named as co-authors. I am also grateful to members of the Library Association clerical staff for many hours of extra work freely and willingly given.



# PART I

## CHAPTER I

### THE PURPOSES AND VALUES OF A LIBRARY SERVICE

Wherever there is a civilization there must be books, and wherever there are books there must be libraries. England and the British Empire and the United States *know* that community libraries, free in every sense but that of their support, are an essential for the intellectual happiness and welfare of a free people. (L. STANLEY JAST)

This report is an attempt to show how far the public libraries of this country are achieving the purposes for which they have been established and maintained, and to indicate ways in which the standard of achievement may be raised and extended. It is a manifest necessity, therefore, that both writer and reader should have a clear understanding of those purposes.

We may regard this matter in both general and specific terms—as to why “Wherever there is a civilization there must be books” and as to how the public library can assist in the development of civilization by making books accessible. By “books” we mean all printed, manuscript, graphic and related records by which knowledge, ideas and imagination can be conserved and disseminated. This definition is itself a statement of the first aspect. Books are not action, though they may be dynamic, nor thought, feeling or experience. They are the record of man’s reactions to his environment in all its phases. They are not life but the representation of life, and he who would regard books and reading as good in themselves starts with a fundamental misapprehension of their function, though this is a fault into which it is easy to fall. Their value lies in enabling men to do, think, feel and understand better than they could if they depended solely on their individual experience and that of those with whom they were in immediate contact. Books can abolish time and distance. Some matters cannot be embraced in such forms of record; many skills and understandings can only be acquired by experience and practice. But a substantial part of the experience, achievement and wisdom of the past and the present can be and is made available in books for all who have the ability and desire to use them. We cannot easily deny that it is a good thing that they should be used. Such denial is certainly not part of the policy of modern democratic society. Indeed, democracy depends upon the universal existence of the ability to participate in democratic government and its cardinal aim is to give equality of opportunity. No other equalities can avail if access to so important a means of individual development is not full and universal.

The maintenance of a sound public library service is therefore as important to the community at large as to each of its members. Failure to provide this service is wasteful to the community and to civilization—wasteful because proper use is not made of those results of experience and thought which are or could be recorded, wasteful because, thereby, those who would find in books the means to increased prosperity, satisfaction and happiness are denied this advantage.

The Public Libraries Committee, referring especially to the rural areas—though the statement is little less applicable elsewhere—said “In those areas where a library service either did not exist, or existed only on a quite inadequate scale, the population was placed at a serious disadvantage. Not only were they ignorant of many of the things which it is a pleasure and a happiness to know, but they were ignorant of things that they ought to know for the utilitarian conduct of their own affairs. They were ill equipped for their duties as citizens. They had no means of verifying the simplest fact, and were at the mercy of the most unblushing mis-statement.” The Committee then proceeded

to "set out the aims which those responsible for a county library policy should have in view".

"(i) To relieve the tedium of idle hours quite irrespective of intellectual profit or educational gain. It is sufficient to satisfy this purpose that the rural inhabitant should be rendered a happier (but not necessarily a more learned) man by the provision which is made for him.

"(ii) To secure that the taste for good English which should be acquired in the elementary school is kept alive and developed by a provision of good literature after school years have ended.

"(iii) To enable the rural inhabitant to acquire without difficulty that general knowledge which alone can enable him to appreciate to the full what he sees and hears.

"(iv) To impart that knowledge of public affairs and of the history of his own neighbourhood which a citizen must possess if he is to perform with intelligence his duties as a member of the community ultimately responsible for the government of the parish, rural district, county and country.

"(v) To provide facilities for the study of the arts, trades and professions which constitute the occupation of the inhabitants.

"(vi) To remove as far as possible all obstacles from the path of the serious student of any subject."

Though they refer especially to the "rural" inhabitant these aims are generally applicable to all forms of public library service. They may not be completely embracing, but if, by implication, they refer not only to adults but also to children and to the various classes of people—such as those in hospital, in prisons, at sea and the like—for whom special provision is needed, they form a sound general statement of our objectives.

The present writer has elaborated these purposes in his book, "Libraries and the Public":

"(a) Children need those books which will make them aware of the extent of life's activities and interests and which will stimulate curiosity and the desire for knowledge and foster the imaginative faculties, encouraging the development of individuality and that intimate personal resourcefulness which alone is the foundation of happiness; they need also books to help in their educational progress and, especially, to broaden its implications. . . .

"(b) The student, in general, needs not perhaps his textbooks but all manner of contributory material—works of reference, texts, sources, books on the side lines and implications of his studies.

"(c) The more advanced student requires a wide variety of specialized, advanced, out-of-the-way and maybe older material, much of which is not obtainable by any individual, except with great difficulty if at all, saving with the assistance of the public library organization. . . .

"(d) The same applies to the scholar, the research worker, the specialist—anyone who is engaged in individualized work involving access to books. There are, of course, the numerous special (non-public) libraries of professional bodies, learned and scientific societies and the like. We do not suggest that the public library should compete with these or duplicate their provision; but it should supplement and co-operate with them and serve those individuals who, for one reason or another, have not access to them.

"(e) All types of vocational activity provoke demands for books and information. The library can help the mechanic, the artisan, the shop assistant and the clerk in their daily work; it can keep the executive officer and the managerial staff in touch with modern practice; it can provide operative, executive and business staffs with answers to the innumerable questions arising in the course of their work. . . . The well-stocked and well-staffed library can improve both the efficiency of the individual and the success of the manufacturing and commercial firms in its district.

"(f) The library can help to humanize and co-ordinate the vocational activities of its readers, by providing material on the conditions—human, geographical, economic, etc.—which govern production and distribution, and by interesting those concerned in the whys and wherefores and the values of their work.

"(g) The public library can play a big part in promoting the best use of leisure. Books on hobbies, pastimes and recreation of all kinds can be of inestimable value. . . .

"(h) Many men have 'intellectual hobbies'—interests which may not arise from their vocations and which they do not study as 'specialists' or with any ulterior motive—such as local history, genealogy, geology, astronomy and innumerable similar and dissimilar matters. Since it is becoming increasingly obvious that in a machine age most men must seek scope for mental development outside their working hours, who can estimate the importance of these intellectual hobbies?

"(i) To others 'ideas' are of supreme appeal; these can find in books the material for speculation on philosophical, ethical, religious, social or scientific matters.

"(j) A large majority of the public are interested in some form of art. . . . The library can do much to promote keener enjoyment and appreciation of all the arts by providing descriptive and critical books and, in the case of the graphic arts, music and literature, much of the actual material of the arts themselves.

"(k) The public library can promote true citizenship—of the community, of the nation, of the world. Knowledge is the basis of sound social co-operation, the stimulus of all reform, the foundation of all morality and the creator of tolerance and sympathy.

"(l) Probably the largest proportion of library use will be that of the indefinable class known as "general reader"—those who, without any conscious purpose beyond an interest in the world at large (or certain aspects of its life), range widely and consistently through various types of literature. . . . This general reading serves both as broad, if unsystematic, education and as recreation; it increases that common fund of ideas which promotes the sociability and oneness of men; it often leads to purposive studies and it is often a corrective to them.

"(m) Finally, there is purely and avowedly recreational, 'pastime' reading . . . that is frequently essential as a change and relaxation."

Public libraries can provide for these needs by making books available. This statement has these implications:

(a) Each individual book user must be provided with the books he requires for any reason, when and where he requires them.

(b) To select, arrange, make available and exploit books adequately in the interest of users, the service of qualified and experienced library personnel is needed.

(c) Each user must have the fullest and most convenient possible access to collections of material which he may use as a workshop, from which he may select the books most appropriate to his needs, which will serve to introduce him to a yet wider and more varied field.

These three points—book supply, staff and service—embrace the essentials of our work. Many aspects of each will be dealt with in the following pages; now it is proposed to mention but a few salient matters.

(a) Book supply: Viewed extensively it must be sufficient to meet all reasonable demands. There are certain limitations (to be discussed later) to the material that should be made available, but subject to these the book supply should be sufficient to meet the needs of readers and to afford facilities for selection. Viewed intensively the supply available should be such that practically any item, no matter how specialized, can be provided. Above all, the book supply should

be closely related to the needs of users. The service should be so organized that, on the one hand, there is the closest possible relation between demand and supply; on the other hand the supply should be such as to stimulate demand. And all material must be in a condition acceptable to users. Most of the major problems of librarianship arise from the fact that true book service is individual but that the needs of individual readers are only partly conditioned by the type of locality in which they reside. It is true that certain demands will surely arise from local circumstances. It is also likely that a large community will provide a greater variety of demand than a small one. But it is equally certain that, reader for reader, the requirements of those in a small community may compass a wide range of material for which there will be some, but proportionately smaller, demand. Since individual service is the keynote of librarianship, though it is manifestly easier to cater for the individual in a large community, we cannot be content if the resident in a small community is unduly prejudiced. And it is highly important to remember that this dictum does not apply only to specialized material which may be made available by inter-library co-operation schemes, but to *all* books.

(b) Staff: If economy and efficiency of book supply are to be achieved it is clear that the service must be administered by personnel capable of organizing the service, selecting the material, co-ordinating the work of the service points and generally facilitating its use. Library work is not merely a matter of cataloguing and classification, important though these may be. It consists in ascertaining the material needed by readers, providing it in differing quantities and at different places so that it may meet demand, of enabling the user to obtain it readily, even of assisting the reader to select and use the books he requires. Librarianship is the art of making books useful. The efficient librarian must know readers and know books; he must be proficient in the various techniques of his work. There must be enough competent library workers to carry out all the important and increasing duties of librarianship. There must be adequate means of selecting and training these people and of giving them the necessary experience to become efficient in their work and the opportunity to perform it.

(c) Service: The required books must be housed and there must be places, suitably situated, to which readers can go to use them and from which they may select those they would borrow. At these places the stock must be suitably displayed and arranged. Library premises in themselves may have no virtues except that of architectural attraction, which is not necessarily incidental or undesirable. The essential is that they should be adequate—as storehouses or as display rooms and workshops—and that they should be sufficient and so sited as to meet the reasonable requirements of users. What is reasonable may vary according to the nature of the demand. Two facts remain—that buildings, like the books they exist to house, should be properly related to the demand for books, and that they should be designed, equipped and maintained so as to facilitate the use of those books. The premises themselves are made into libraries by the efficient operation of the staff. Good service implies good administration, good organization and good housekeeping. Further, the library service must in certain circumstances even go beyond the provision of actual premises, devising means of taking library facilities to those readers for whom premises cannot be economically provided.

Books, staff and service points are, however, but the material elements. They could exist in plenty and yet the libraries could fail to give their full potential benefit to the community; they could even be harmful instruments. With them must go not only an appreciation of their purposes but also an acceptance of those tenets which form the philosophy of librarianship—tenets which are inherent in an understanding of its objectives.

The first of these is that the library service exists to serve—to give without question, favour or limitations. It is an instrument for the promotion of all or any of the activities of its readers. Therefore, secondly, it must be catholic and

all-embracing. Whenever, as may often be the case because of financial and other limitations, it must choose between types of provision, this must always be in accord with the value of the services to the individuals requiring them—not because of our own idea or opinion of what the demands should be. So, the third and all important tenet is that libraries should be “free in every sense”—not only universally available regardless of a man’s resources, but free also in the sense that they offer sanctuary to all facets of opinion and all aspects of knowledge. It is just because the library could be, and has indeed been, used as a powerful propaganda weapon that all who value librarianship insist that it shall not be so used.

Thus our freedom has prompted many to think of libraries as “a great instrument and bulwark of democracy”, to quote one correspondent. “The library service”, he states, “should be guided by a constant endeavour to realize democratic ideals. Freedom of thought and opinion, representative control and equality of opportunity are fundamentals which a nation worthy of victory will preserve in her institutions. Nowhere is there greater scope for their influential embodiment than in the library service. . . . Democracy, rightly understood, is a positive creed and its political and social values would be greatly strengthened if the library service was planned on national lines to support them.” One is tempted to accept this view without question. Yet it is not the whole and incontrovertible statement of the creed of librarianship because it ignores the ultimate fact that democracy to be sane must be desired by a people qualified by their own understanding to judge it and shape its course. The words “if the library service was planned . . . to support them” are the dangerous words. Speaking for ourselves we certainly want democracy; we may believe that it is the only sound basis for the conduct of human affairs. But we do not want our libraries to support democracy as a positive creed in opposition to any other creed and we want libraries to produce citizens who will be qualified to *choose* wisely and freely whatever form of government they think best. We may have not the slightest doubt what their choice will be. That cannot affect our attitude as librarians.

Therefore may we not prefer, as the crystallization of our faith, the words of another who writes thus: “We library workers exist in our jobs to create *whole* personalities; that is, personalities balanced in body, mind and spirit—live and conscious individuals. . . . Inspired by this purpose libraries will materially help to reveal to every person his responsibility for service to his fellow men, which alone can be the basis of a new community.”

This purpose of trying, so far as our means and methods allow, to create the “whole personality” is surely accepted, if differently expressed, by a third correspondent who is quoted because he reminds us that for all our catholicity, freedom and desire to serve all who can be served there is a distinct difference between the library as an indiscriminate universal provider and the library as an instrument for the creation of whole personalities—a difference we shall be well advised to observe though we should not be too hidebound as to the means by which we may secure the end. In his words the library has three purposes:

- “(1) to afford an opportunity for reading those books which foster a full and good life.
- (2) to provide a source of information.
- (3) to enable a person to develop to the fullest extent any abilities which he may possess that will be of benefit to society in so far as they can be developed by books.”

This is a clear and acceptable statement. One might add that the third purpose should include the development of those abilities which will be of benefit to himself, but the probable and just answer to this might be that this also should be of benefit to society.



He continues : " if the above are the right aims of a public library it follows that it should not (1) promote reading habits that lower the tone of individual mentality, (2) foster reading habits that lead to a waste of mental energy, (3) substitute reading for more beneficial pursuits, and (4) substitute reading where reading could, but need not, be a substitute. This point about reading being a substitute is important, because there is no value in reading as such. Its value lies in enabling us to receive ideas and experience emotions which we cannot obtain by direct experience. Like all substitutes it is seldom equal in value to the real thing. Who can doubt that it would have been better to have conversed with Socrates than to read about him ? "

The warning is a wise one. Quality is more important than quantity. The circulation of large numbers of books regardless of their worth to multitudes of people who read them because they have no appreciation of the true value of life or of books is no better criterion of mental health than is the profitable sale of quack medicines evidence of bodily health—it is probably evidence of disease. Such circulation may contribute little to the creation of whole personalities but it may do much to discredit the circulators. Nevertheless the librarian must avoid the opposite extreme, and he must avoid betraying his own ideals of freedom by attempting to assert his own ideas and values. He must recognize that a thing which may be valueless to one man may be most helpful to another, that in an imperfect world of imperfect readers there is a place for the imperfect book. This is a situation much debated between the two camps of those who would give everyone what he wants and those who would give each reader only the things of some constructive value. Yet it is not a matter which should be debated ; there is no real dilemma, because both sides readily accept the criterion that the library should not " promote reading habits that lower the tone of individual mentality ". There are thus—subject to this reservation—three points to bear in mind : (1) that it is only necessary to choose between types of provision when resources are limited ; need they be so limited ? (2) that the only true education in the better use of books is that afforded by a thoroughly comprehensive supply of all types at all service points though this is not an economic proposition so long as we must consider the volume of use of individual items and so cater for common denominator rather than individual demands ; (3) that our ultimate hope must be found in the good sense of the people ; we can never make them do what they do not want to do ; we can only give them the opportunity to do the best that they find themselves able and willing to achieve. These three points mean precisely the same thing : that our library provision and our book stocks in particular must be designed for one thing and one thing only—to provide opportunity. If there are people who do not want to become whole individuals, influences more potent, persuasive or punitive than libraries will fail to alter them. But the library can help those who do want, it may lead others to want—and it may do much to make the remainder less un-whole than they might otherwise be.

So we would end this section on the purpose of libraries. They are purposes worthy of our every endeavour ; they are purposes clear-cut, complete, eminently desirable and attainable, and they are purposes limited, vague, incomplete and elusive.

We are willing to try and do the best we may, however little or however much it may signify to any particular individual. We have only one determination—that libraries shall not fail anyone who turns to them in his genuine need.

There is one further general aspect, a clear understanding of which must precede any constructive examination of the library service : How far do the purposes of libraries coincide with, supplement and differ from those of organized education ? Is there sufficient affinity of function to justify a close association or even an amalgamation of librarian and educationist and of library authority and education authority, or are the methods and fields of operation of both so

different in essentials that independence is necessary to each for its proper development?

In the Adult Education Committee of the Ministry of Reconstruction "summed up strongly in favour of the transfer of library activities to the control of local education authorities", but the authors of the Report, after a close analysis of the arguments pro and con, gave a very clear answer to this suggestion: "It is along other lines that we should seek for the co-ordination of the public libraries with the education system of the country, the lines of co-operation rather than subordination."

So long as we think in terms of our present educational system the justice of this reply cannot be questioned. To quote from the Report: "School Boards and Education Committees have been working for half a century on a conception of education far narrower than the Platonic and have been accustomed to think of education in terms of schools." But, still to quote from the Report, "It is now becoming more and more recognized that education is not a process confined to the years of school or (for those who are so fortunate as to enjoy this advantage) university attendance, but is prolonged throughout adult life, and that the State does well to encourage as best it can the continuance of this process through adult years, in order to promote the production of a well-educated community. . . . If, therefore, we were legislating for a Platonic Republic, with the Platonic conception of education fully accepted by the community (including municipal corporations and their electors) it would be natural to consider the department of education as embracing not merely elementary and secondary schools and universities but also libraries, museums, art galleries and perhaps also recreational organizations. In this sense the public libraries would come under the administration of Education Committees, but they would be Education Committees taking a wider view of their functions than those hitherto generally accepted. . . . It is, in short, only on the assumption of this wider conception of education, and of a *tabula rasa* on which to work, that we could recommend placing the public libraries under the control of Education Committees. With the arguments against placing them under the control of authorities mainly concerned with and interested in schools we entirely agree. Schools and libraries are both essential parts of the provision that should be made for the training of the citizen. Their spheres of action overlap, but their atmospheres are different, and to no body of lesser scope than the Council as a whole, or a Committee envisaging all the intellectual activities of adult and juvenile alike, should be entrusted the responsibility of weighing their comparative claims on the funds at the disposal of the community."

How far and how soon this "Platonic conception" of education will in fact secure acceptance in educational circles we cannot guess. Recent statements regarding post-war educational programmes certainly indicate that many are thinking in terms of educational activities which will stretch far beyond the confines of the school. One writer in *The Times Educational Supplement*, for example, said recently that "within the orbit of this new conception [of adult education] come the community centre, the village hall, the cinema, the radio, and the public house".

We can only hope and believe that such extravagant views will not find acceptance in responsible quarters. We do not look forward to a post-war world in which everyday social and intellectual activities are regimented, standardized and formalized or where the art of living is robbed of those joys which arise from free will and inconsequence in order that all should engage in a seriously deadly process of adult education. Education has a great deal yet to achieve within its normal legitimate present and future boundaries; it will be a grave mistake and a public danger if those boundaries are pushed too far into the defences of individualism. Education is a means and not an end. No man is the better *just* by being educated: he may be much worse, much less useful and happy. He is

the better for education when, and only when, he is thereby enabled to live fruitfully, usefully and as an individual. We learn to walk in order to "go places", not to perambulate within prison walls. So it is with education. When it has helped the pupil, young or old, to think and act for himself, to be a free individual in a social world, it has achieved its purpose. If it persists like an over-anxious Nanny in running after a grown-up child, either the child will rudely and ungratefully tell Nanny not to fuss or the child will fail to develop its independence and suffer from frustration. This viewpoint does not overlook the great need for genuine adult educational activities; just as the child who once needed help in order to walk may later seek expert coaching in order to run, swim, play tennis and golf or fly, so will the adult student seek facilities for specialized, advanced education in all manner of things. The fact remains that, whether it is given to young or old, education must remain fundamentally a process of providing mental equipment. If the education has been imparted wisely the recipient will surely have gained much inspiration and guidance as to how best that equipment may be employed. But once this guidance becomes explicit rather than implicit, once the educationist seeks to say *what* the pupil should do and think rather than to show him *how* he can do so, he is entering dangerous and forbidden territory.

What has this to do with libraries? Much. It should indicate both the similarity and dissimilarity of libraries and education. Both are means not ends. Neither has any right to dictate or seek to influence the use to which men and women will put their respective services. For intellectual life in the widest meaning of the words the educationist, as before said, provides—as far as he may—the mental equipment; the librarian offers the material equipment. The educationist teaches how to read intelligently, how to reason, how to utilize facts and ideas for the achievement of an individual task; he discloses and stimulates the development of natural faculties and circumstances. The pupil when the educationist sends him out into life should know that he is master of his fate, that he is—or should and can be—a rational being, living in a society, with opportunities and responsibilities, gifted with imaginative and creative abilities. The librarian has to provide him with the books from which he can gain knowledge, by which he can stimulate his intellect and exercise his imagination.

We may say that if the educationist teaches him how to use tools the librarian provides the material from which things can be made while life itself will determine what things shall be made and how they are to be used. We are both—let it be repeated, for it is all-important—means, not ends. Thus far our functions are similar if different. The genuine dissimilarity is disclosed when we note the inherent differences in method and of impact upon society. The teacher seeking to inculcate a skill selects those materials and objects for construction which are best suited for that end. The handicraft master tells his pupils to make a soap-dish or a tooth-brush rack not because soap-dishes and tooth-brush racks are necessarily desirable things to possess but because by making them the pupil learns best how to use his tools to make any other things. Throughout the educative process, if it is genuine, the primary concern is the development of abilities and consequently, throughout, the materials and ends will be governed chiefly by that consideration. So long as he truly educates, the teacher will continue this process. The librarian, on the other hand, is not concerned merely with the acquisition of skill but with its application. He can provide material for the student, but mostly he provides it for those who are no longer students. If the bridge between the use of material for tuitional purposes and its exploitation for wider, non-tuitional ends is to be secure it is surely wise that the two elements should be distinct and independent even if closely allied. Moreover—and this is a vital difference—the educationist has a preliminary function, the librarian a constant never-ending duty. The educationist needs but a small part of the material, for a short time and for limited purposes; the librarian gives it to all

men at all times and for all purposes. Consequently he serves many more people in many more ways.

Thus one is forced to the conclusion that the work of the library is so different in kind and in scope that, however much the field of genuine adult education may expand, any subordination or amalgamation of education and library work would inevitably stultify one or both. People will not make the fullest, most fruitful use of libraries unless they are well educated; neither will they live physically healthy lives, or be good citizens, capable workers or men and women able to enjoy their leisure. We admit our indebtedness to education; we ask that that debt shall become vastly greater. But we must insist most categorically that our functions are of such a nature as to require full independence and the opportunity to devise a machinery for our work which will be as closely related to our purposes as the machinery of education should be related to its own.

## PART II

### PRESENT CONDITIONS

#### INTERLUDE

Since statistics—saving certain which relate to financial factors—have been eschewed and because it is fitting that throughout our critical examination of the library service we should never lose sight of its importance or of the great amount of valuable work that is being done by libraries for all their shortcomings, let us repeat and bring up to date the statistical summary given on page 36 of the 1927 Report.

- A: Urban Library Authorities only.  
 B: County Library Authorities only.  
 C: Urban and County Authorities together.

Year.	Volumes in Stock.			Issues.		Borrowers.		Expenditure.	
	Population.	Total.	Per 100 of Pop.	Total.	Per 100 of Pop.	Total.	Per 100 of Pop.	Total.	Per Caput.
<b>A</b>								£	s. d.
*1911	22,559,427	9,414,829	43·1	48,828,831	224	—	—	727,308	0 8
*1921	23,987,903	10,670,570	48·4	54,416,322	247	1,985,123	9·3	1,130,789	1 0
*1924	24,168,702	12,330,915	52·3	73,729,094	305	2,500,961	11·0	1,189,500	1 0
*1932	25,878,261	16,604,071	64·2	136,231,833	526	4,320,731	16·7	1,703,276	1 4
*1935	26,636,654	18,433,775	69·2	142,874,790	536	4,514,770	16·9	1,910,269	1 5
1935	30,136,153	21,342,122	70·8	160,617,694	533	5,083,369	16·9	2,159,871	1 5
*1939	26,849,176	21,618,565	80·5	170,108,003	634	5,354,202	19·9	2,339,488	1 9
1939	30,334,473	24,804,277	81·8	187,882,252	619	6,056,903	20·0	2,626,408	1 9
<b>B</b>									
1924	7,212,657	597,254	8·3	3,093,668	43	—	—	23,018	0 0½
1932	16,068,440	3,757,746	23·4	33,722,871	210	1,535,480	9·6	236,155	0 3
1935	16,017,150	5,433,772	33·9	47,364,648	296	2,058,732	12·9	280,785	0 4
1939	16,351,959	7,744,662	47·4	59,453,073	364	2,880,024	17·6	551,552	0 8
<b>C</b>									
1935	46,153,303	26,775,894	58	207,982,342	451	7,142,101	15·5	2,440,656	1 1
1939	46,686,432	32,548,939	69·7	247,335,325	530	8,936,927	19·1	3,177,960	1 4½

\* Figures for England and Wales only; all other figures are for Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

## CHAPTER II

### COVERAGE, STANDARDS, TYPES OF LIBRARY AREA

In this part of the report the writer discusses the British public library service as it is at present. This discussion is based upon such knowledge of the service as he has been able to gain by a general study of conditions and by personal survey in the past few months, limited though it may have been, of representative libraries of all types covering more than one-fifth of all the library systems in the country. It must, however, be appreciated that the following observations are essentially critical and constructive. This is important because, though the writer has sought to retain a sense of proportion and to give due credit for good achievement, it is his primary intention to give a realistic account of needs and deficiencies. If, therefore, the following pages seem to be more concerned with these than with a recital of the many good features, this is because it is just the best services themselves that show the need for providing good facilities everywhere. Indeed the writer has sought, when surveying the various aspects of his field, to judge the failures by the successes, rather than according to any preconceived notion of his own. The standards for which he advocates general adoption are those already attained or sought by the more progressive authorities. In other words he is not seeking to construct anything for which the plans have not been already clearly drawn up by the best architects of librarianship.

#### COVERAGE

The first consideration is, How far is the country "covered"—how far are its people, wherever they reside, able to avail themselves of adequate library facilities?

The Libraries Acts are "adoptive"—that is to say, potential library authorities may or may not decide to avail themselves of their powers to provide a library service. Practically every competent authority has done so; in itself this is evidence of universal belief in the need for libraries. The fact also obviates any need for argument whether the few non-adopting authorities should adopt the Acts since if they are in such a very small minority it must indeed be difficult to assert sufficient local grounds for abstention.

Nevertheless *the local authorities for 356,881 people have not adopted the Acts* (population figures are pre-war).

This total is made up as follows:

(a) County Councils which have not adopted the Acts:

Argyllshire	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	55,119
Rutlandshire	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	17,860

- (b) Areas for which the county would be the library authority had not the county excluded them from the areas for which it adopted the Acts:—The reason can be traced back to the early, tentative days of county libraries when it was generally believed that the county service was primarily a rural service. Such counties seem to have felt either that it was not within the scope of the county service to provide for the urban areas within them or that suitable provision was too expensive and too difficult to be attempted. Since the county library rate must be levied on the whole area, and it would be unfair to levy a rate without giving service, some counties deliberately excluded from the area of adoption certain districts they did not propose to serve—and the areas naturally concurred, agreeing that they should not be rated for services from which they could not directly benefit. Most counties did not make such specific exclusions as they realized that it was only a matter of time before they would attempt suitable provision—and meanwhile they did whatever was possible and consistent with standards of provision for the

county at large. Others have since rescinded their exclusions. Nevertheless the following remain :

Harwich (Essex)	..	..	..	..	..	..	12,760
Cirencester (Gloucestershire)	..	..	..	..	..	..	8,138
Ashington (Northumberland)	..	..	..	..	..	..	29,870
Bedlingtonshire (Northumberland)	..	..	..	..	..	..	27,310
Berwick (Northumberland)	..	..	..	..	..	..	12,060
Gosforth (Northumberland)	..	..	..	..	..	..	20,270
Hexham (Northumberland)	..	..	..	..	..	..	9,057
Newbiggin (Northumberland)	..	..	..	..	..	..	8,915
Banbury (Oxfordshire)	..	..	..	..	..	..	15,500
Henley-on-Thames (Oxfordshire)	..	..	..	..	..	..	7,024
Swindon (Wiltshire)	..	..	..	..	..	..	60,570
Mountain Ash (Glamorgan)	..	..	..	..	..	..	33,700
Rothsay (Bute County)	..	..	..	..	..	..	8,161
Ballycastle; Ballyclare; Ballymoney; Carrickfergus; Whitehead (Co. Antrim)	..	..	..	..	..	..	30,567
							<hr/> 283,902

The total was higher very recently as Co. Down (population—excluding five urban libraries—164,680) only adopted the Acts in 1940. Strictly speaking Westmorland should be included in the list as it has not formally adopted the Acts, but it contributes to a joint scheme operated by the Kendal Public Library.

Also it should be noted that at Cirencester there is a “public” library maintained by funds from a private endowment, and at Swindon a library provided by the G.W.R. Mechanics’ Institute. Both of these are comparable with the average provision in similar towns.

The “excluded” authorities can, of course, themselves adopt the Acts if they wish. But apart from Swindon they are all so small that it would be a pity if they were compelled to do so. The county authorities have a clear moral obligation to exercise their powers. Although the service given by some counties in some similar places is very bad, at least the keen reader has *some* chance of obtaining books if only by post from county headquarters; these people have none, which is a scandalous position.

Adoption of the Acts does not, however, necessarily imply that the acquired powers have been implemented. If the position is unchallenged nothing may be expended or done; if challenged the expenditure of a token sum of a few pounds is legally sufficient to prevent the county authorities from taking such places into the county service.

The following authorities have “adopted the Acts” but done nothing worth consideration towards implementing them :

Weymouth M.B.	..	..	..	..	..	..	32,810
Barnes M.B.	..	..	..	..	..	..	40,960
Newburn U.D.	..	..	..	..	..	..	19,370
Whitby U.D.	..	..	..	..	..	..	11,500

These four are independent authorities for the whole areas concerned. But the tale of theoretical adoption is not complete unless we include those counties which have adopted the Acts for the whole county area but failed to make any provision in certain places (except perhaps the right of individual residents therein to apply to County Headquarters for the books they require, *if* they know that they may do so and *if* such books are available). A list of these places cannot be given owing to inadequate information. In the tables in the 1938-9 Report of the County Libraries Section there is a column for the number of “Population at present not served”. This totals 538,982 people. But it is not clear on what

basis the figures are, in each county, assessed. Some libraries have regarded an area as "not served" if it was not provided with an appropriate branch, although it was imperfectly served by centres; conversely others have regarded an area as "served" if its inhabitants could use the postal services of County Headquarters. With such diverse interpretations the resulting total is worthless. But if we accepted the first definition of service (i.e. by appropriate branches) this total could safely be multiplied several times.

Yet a few more of the population are not properly served if (disregarding *standards* of provision) we include those districts where, though the Acts have been adopted and some type of service is given, this is only partial. We mean "partial" in the sense that the service given is confined to one or other—and possibly the least essential—of the generally recognized forms of provision (lending, reference, etc.). We cannot, for example, truthfully say that an area has a library service if that service is confined to the provision of a news-room and nothing else. This is true of a few urban areas. Similarly, full service is not available at Bexhill (23,430) and the City of London (9,180), where there are only reference libraries, though the latter is served by non-municipal endowed lending libraries (The Bishopsgate and Cripplegate Institutes and St. Bride Foundation).

Neither can we be satisfied (again regardless of standards) that an area is provided with a library service when, though there is obvious and manifest need for adequate, perhaps full-time branches, the only service available is that afforded by small centres containing some 100 or so books changed infrequently and open only a few hours per week. If we accepted the standard adopted by some counties that every urban congregation exceeding 3,000 population should have at least a special library room with a stock of some 2,000 to 3,000 books open three or four days a week, we should have to give a list of places, where this is not provided, far too extensive for inclusion in this report. Even if we raised the limit so far as to 10,000 the list would still be long. This matter is discussed in Chapter III; meanwhile let us note that over two million people live in towns of this size (over 10,000) in county areas of Great Britain which lack full-time branch libraries.

In other cases, which must be plentiful, there may be centres somewhere in the rural districts or parishes but they are so far from hamlets or even villages therein as to be quite useless; it is often easier and quicker for a man to go to the next town than to the next village, though the latter may be geographically nearer. One cannot estimate the extent to which rural inhabitants are so deprived of library facilities.

In towns the problem is scarcely less acute. The number of branch libraries in any area, and the distance potential readers must go to visit a branch or the central, and the various peculiar geographical and social difficulties in the way of proper library use are all real considerations when the question of "coverage" is being reviewed—for the library which the would-be reader cannot visit without undue expenditure of time and money cannot be regarded as giving effective library provision. To cite but three examples:

"A" has a population of nearly 150,000, and covers an area of over 9,000 acres. It has only two branches and needs four more.

"B", population about 110,000, area nearly 9,000 acres, has no branch and needs at least two (it has built 8,000 working-class dwellings on the outskirts within recent years).

"C", population 82,000, area over 7,000 acres, is large enough to require 22 elementary schools but has no branch library.

The above mentioned may be regarded as quantitative limitations. Before we can judge whether the library service is satisfactory we must know also about its quality. Quality is all important since a bad library is of very little value and may be, and often is, an extravagant provision. The fact remains, however, that until there is some form of service within reasonable access of every section of the public, questions of quality do not yet in such cases arise.



We cannot estimate with any approach to accuracy the coverage deficiencies of the whole country in terms of population. Most certainly it is some four millions ; it may well approach twice that number.

The quality of the service depends upon a great many elements which may best be considered separately. This is attempted in the following pages, where various aspects of provision in differing types of area are discussed in more detail.

#### TYPES OF LIBRARY AREA

Until any local authority other than a county council could adopt the libraries Acts and provide—or attempt to provide—a public library service. In 1919 county councils also were given powers but neither then nor later were the counties or any other authorities given any right to supersede, except by consent, authorities which had exercised their powers prior to 1919. Consequently we find an extraordinary range of library authorities—some concerned with only three or four hundred people, others serving units of over a million—operating over areas of anything between 400 and 2,600,000 acres. Of the 603 independent library authorities serving populations and areas between these limits examples of all intermediate types may be found.

The following table shows the number of urban authorities in Great Britain and Northern Ireland in each of the population groups adopted in the Report, as at the commencement of the war.

Population Group.	No. of Library Authorities in Group.			
Over 500,000	..	..	..	5
300,000 to 500,000	..	..	..	6
200,000 to 300,000	..	..	..	17
150,000 to 200,000	..	..	..	13
100,000 to 150,000	..	..	..	36
75,000 to 100,000	..	..	..	33
50,000 to 75,000	..	..	..	48
40,000 to 50,000	..	..	..	38 excluding Barnes
30,000 to 40,000	..	..	..	58 excluding Weymouth
25,000 to 30,000	..	..	..	22
20,000 to 25,000	..	..	..	35
10,000 to 20,000	..	..	..	87 excluding Newburn and Whitby
5,000 to 10,000	..	..	..	(a) 51
Under 5,000	..	..	..	(b) 58
Total	..	..	..	507 plus 4 (Acts not in operation)

(a) Leominster relinquished powers to Herefordshire in

(b) Queenborough relinquished powers to Kent in ; Downpatrick to Co. Down in

The county authorities were in the Report classified in "age" groups according to the year of adoption. In the following table the county authorities are arranged according to population as they were in

Population Group.	No. of Authorities in Group.			
Over 500,000	..	..	..	7
300,000 to 500,000	..	..	..	9
200,000 to 300,000	..	..	..	13
150,000 to 200,000	..	..	..	8 excluding Co. Down established in
100,000 to 150,000	..	..	..	10
50,000 to 100,000	..	..	..	25
25,000 to 50,000	..	..	..	11
Under 25,000	..	..	..	9 excluding Radnorshire established in:
Total	..	..	..	92 plus 2 established since

The size of the unit of independent service as measured by population is very material because, *inter alia*, the authority's ability to make library provision depends upon the amount of money it can reasonably raise for this purpose. Population is not of course the sole factor. The relative ability will vary considerably according to the wealth of the unit as measured, for example, by the rateable value *per caput*. Furthermore, the density of population and the geographical difficulties will go far to making comparable provision for a given number of people expensive or otherwise. On the other hand, however, is the fact, now universally recognized, that the cost per head of comparable service normally varies in inverse ratio to the size of the unit of service. This is partly because the denser the population the smaller the administrative expenses per head, as a rule, and the sparser the population the higher the administrative expenses per head, a condition recognized in the "weighted population" system of government grants-in-aid. But it is still more so because every community comprises individuals each with his own requirements. Some of these requirements are common to so many people that, apart from geographical factors, they may be shared by a sufficient number in even a relatively small community to cost no more than in a larger unit. Others, however, are shared by so few that only in large units can they be met economically. This common denominator is found to a varying extent throughout the whole range of library provision. The resident in a very small village may require material that only one man may want in a large city. Such exceptions may be met by co-operative schemes. More important is the fact that to give the average reader access to the general body of literature, and to afford him adequate opportunity for choice, more books per hundred readers must be provided in the small library than in the large. Neither is book stock the only element; for example, the large body of readers can share the services of expert staff which the small unit cannot afford to employ at all.

The 1927 Report strongly advocated that no unit with a population below 20,000 should attempt to provide an independent service. This view has been adopted also by the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust. This proposition will be re-examined here, but we must not be content merely to discover the size below which it is normally undesirable to have an independent service. We must go beyond that and learn how far the factors which make small units impracticable continue to operate in larger units and the extent to which they militate against efficiency.

In the following pages the writer describes and discusses various salient features of the library services of today, basing his arguments largely but by no means exclusively upon those seen in his journeyings. He has not confined himself, in this section, to description. Though certain matters will be treated generally in succeeding sections, it has seemed simpler to intersperse comment and opinion as occasion arises in the descriptive context.

County libraries are dealt with first; then urban libraries in size groups; after that follows discussion of special aspects—departments, premises, finance, etc.

## CHAPTER III

### COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEMS

Though the county library systems are all relatively "young", most have been established long enough for one to judge both the potentialities and the limitations of county library service. The best county systems are already in the forefront; their standards of provision as regards book stock, premises and administration, and the way they give concrete expression to the best ideals of librarianship, entitle them to rank with the best urban systems. Though the worst are probably not so bad as the worst urban systems, their standards are so low as to indicate a very poor appreciation of their obligations.

I have personally seen something of the work of 26 county systems and have studied the information available regarding others.

County systems are little less various than urban. In population they range from 3,572 people to 834,848, in area from 35,000 acres to 2,614,000 acres, in density of population from 7.5 persons per square mile to 5,290, and even considering only English counties (for the differences are greater in Scotland and Wales) in rateable value *per caput* from £3.1 to £10.8. Some are predominantly rural in that they serve few sizeable urban congregations; one is largely urban or at least suburban; others embrace both thickly populated industrial regions and purely rural districts; others are on the whole rural but embrace considerable urban areas.

In many of the geographical counties most of the urban population is in existing and independent library areas; in a few the county library must give suitable service to large towns which either had not previously adopted the Acts or which have grown up since 1919.

Clearly we cannot accept any necessary distinction between county and urban libraries which is based upon a difference in type of provision—of rural as distinct from urban. For there are, even within the bounds of a single county, many examples of urban units which, though independent, are smaller than others served by the county. Conversely, there are several large urban areas served by the counties. Thus, though there are 460 boroughs and urban districts with populations below 10,000 in county library areas, there are 106 in the same population group which are independent. And whereas there are 254 places of over 30,000 with independent libraries, there are 39 in county areas. Naturally most of the larger places are independent; they had several generations' start over the counties. Yet a service cannot be described as "rural" when it serves 12 towns of over 50,000; neither can that of all towns be considered purely urban—there is at least one large city with several "village" centres within its boundaries. The distinction between the county and the urban authorities is to a considerable degree not that of function but the fortuitous one that for some places the county council is the library authority and for others the urban district or borough council. Even if it were possible to divide library service into rural and urban the fact remains that such division has not yet been achieved and it has yet to be proved whether such division is desirable.

The basic method adopted by the county libraries for providing library service consists of (a) a headquarters at which is maintained a reservoir of stock from which collections of books are sent out to (b) the centres and branches to which readers have recourse for selecting and obtaining their normal requirements. These are supplemented by (c) some form of individual service for "students" and others with needs which cannot be met by the normal stocks at centres and branches; this service is usually by post, often it is given to callers at headquarters, often it is given through branches and centres. Certain counties add to their facilities in various ways, e.g. by van delivery to individuals or families, by a

scheme of informal centres known as "borrower-distributors", by co-operative arrangements with independent urban libraries, etc.

The distinction between a centre and a branch has long remained vague; the terms are indeed used synonymously in some systems. To facilitate understanding the following definitions were advocated in the 1938-9 Report of the County Libraries Section of the Library Association:

"(a) A Full-time Branch is one open not less than 30 hours per week, and with a trained staff.

"(b) A Part-time Branch is one open less than 30 hours but more than 10 hours per week, is housed in premises which are specially fitted and equipped, and are not normally used for any other purpose, and is staffed by paid workers.

"(c) A Centre is a service point either open less than 10 hours per week or housed in premises normally used for other purposes, or in premises not adequately furnished and equipped."

These definitions are not easy to apply to actual conditions, however; they imply the adoption of standards which are not yet generally accepted—e.g. that all full-time and part-time branches should be staffed by trained persons, whereas there are instances of both full- and part-time branches which are staffed by paid but untrained staff and by volunteers.

The following definitions might thus be substituted:

"That a Branch is a library, housed in premises set aside for the purpose and specially equipped and furnished, housing a stock of not less than 3,000 volumes and serving a population, in its immediate vicinity, of about 3,000 people or more, whereas a Centre is any smaller collection of books."

The question of hours and staffing, though most important when considering the standard of service given, are not germane to the definition as, for example, there is no reason why even small centres should not be administered by trained paid staff, whereas in reality large full-time branches are unfortunately sometimes attended only by untrained volunteers, and, moreover, the actual number of hours open must be determined and judged in relation to the needs of the users.

The salient considerations are how far the branches and centres are adequate to meet the legitimate needs of readers (a) as regards number, size, suitability and siting, and (b) as regards the quality of the book stock and the staffing provided.

## CENTRES

The average centre is a small collection of books sent to some place at which borrowers may see them and make their choice. It is accommodated in premises used primarily for other purposes, and, with a few exceptions, managed by a volunteer or volunteers.

It is accepted in theory that the centre should be provided only where it is not practicable or economical to maintain a branch. In practice a large number of communities are served by centres though branches are manifestly desirable. Nevertheless it must be agreed that in some thousands of small, usually rural, communities the centre is the only possible provision, though it is doubtful whether full attention has yet been given to possibilities for mitigating its limitations.

Broadly speaking there are three kinds of centres—"general" centres catering either for all readers, adult and juvenile, or for adults only; centres for children only; and centres provided specially for definite groups of people or for specific purposes—e.g. centres at hospitals, sanatoria, convalescent homes, lighthouses, prisons, approved schools, technical schools, training colleges.

We will deal here with "general" centres:

These have been established in a great variety of places—village halls, church rooms, community centres, miners' institutes, working men's clubs, shops, public houses, private residences, vicarages, council offices, post offices, etc.

A majority are, however, in schools. This is due largely to the association

of the county library movement with the education authority making it natural that, to secure development in the initial stages of the service, use should be made of the premises and personnel available and under the control of the education authorities.

In a great many places, however, the school would seem to be the only available place at which a centre could be established. Such circumstances must be accepted. Moreover, it would be most ungracious and unjust if full tribute were not paid to the thousands of teachers who have done admirable work as volunteer centre librarians, showing thereby a fine spirit of public service. Here, as always in this report, criticism must not be taken to imply lack of appreciation. Nevertheless we must ask ourselves whether the school is—given any alternative—the best location for a centre. A large majority of those county librarians with whom this point was discussed agreed that it is not. They say that the placing of a centre in a school creates the impression that it is educational and that it is for children rather than “grown-ups”—and the majority of villagers, however unwisely, look askance at “educational” activities and they do not care to be associated with juvenile provisions. Furthermore the adolescent on leaving school is apt to put aside, as quickly and completely as possible, all things childish, including therefore the library. As more than one county librarian asserted, the best place for an adult centre is one to which adults resort for other purposes.

The school also presents practical difficulties. Though in many cases the centre is opened throughout the year, in others it is closed for the long holidays, during which the residents are deprived of library service. And, as in war-time a majority of schools are not provided with “black-out”, the hours of opening of a school centre are frequently confined to daylight hours, though obviously, the library cannot be open during school hours. Again many schools have inadequate accommodation for the books and book-cases. One has only to visit representative village schools to realize that, whether they were designed inadequately long ago or more recently and with regard for maximum light and other educational requirements, there is little wall or floor space for the proper display of books. Having seen boxes of books lying open on the floors and benches of bare village schools, one cannot but appreciate the genuine enthusiasm of readers who will go and select their books under such adverse and uninviting conditions. Frequently, the adults never themselves visit the school centres; they read such books as their children take home. In such circumstances their choice of reading cannot be very discriminating; and one wonders what happens when their children leave school. Where the children (and their parents) live at a distance from any village this may be a present convenience; undoubtedly, however, such people should be served by travelling libraries, or a like service.

There are several instances of school centres run by non-teachers (just as there are examples of teachers running centres which are not in schools), but on the whole the school centre implies the teacher-librarian. The proportion of good teacher volunteers is quite as high as that of non-teacher volunteers, but it would be unjust to the teachers themselves to overlook the fact that, by and large, this duty is one that is thrust upon them as an additional obligation from which it would at least be impolitic to escape. It is to their credit that seldom has this minimised their interest and keenness, but it does result in there being a certain number of inefficient and apathetic librarians who cannot, however they themselves wish it, be removed from an unwanted office unless the centre is removed also.

Other available centres are not immune from criticism. If they are in places with definite religious, political or social associations, their work is likely to be limited. The churchman—and we must accept the fact without criticism—will often not willingly go to a centre in a chapel hall and *vice versa*; the teetotaller will not go to one in a public house; the shopkeeper class avoids one in a miners' institute; men dislike going to a women's club or women to a men's;

even a centre in a private house may fail to give full service because some people will hesitate to "trouble" the householder—or may not like him; and the centre in a shop is not liked by those who feel that they ought to buy something.

The ideal centre is one situated in a non-denominational, non-political hall or club such as is used for dances, meetings and whist drives—or in some general community centre. Fortunately there are many such places and wherever they exist they should, if possible, be used. Where they do not exist, though much good can be done in less satisfactory places, we must face the fact that for full service we must create our own centres, either actually by the renting or erection (in conjunction with other purposes) of suitable premises, or by providing a travelling library. In this way, in years to come, the library authority may usefully and legitimately contribute to the general welfare of the village community.

As a rule, with very few exceptions, centres are staffed by volunteers. Every year every county library rightly expresses its gratitude to those public-spirited men and women who regularly give of their time and thought—and again one would wish to be associated with this appreciation. Most volunteer librarians are, within their necessary limitations, good, keen and thorough. In the small minority of cases where they are not, however, the service may, through inefficiency, slackness, favouritism and the like, suffer seriously. Yet, particularly in a small community, it is not easy to remove an unsatisfactory volunteer without causing a local upheaval, and it is not always possible to find a substitute.

The most important limitation of all but exceptionally capable volunteers is, however, that they are not acquainted with the wider resources of the library of which the centre is but a small element. They may be, and frequently are, well read and intelligent people anxious to help and encourage the reader to obtain his individual needs, but they cannot have that knowledge of books in general or of the technique of serving readers which should be possessed by an experienced trained assistant.

Moreover, though the need may arise only in exceptional areas, the county librarian has not the same measure of control of the volunteer as he would have over the paid assistant. Some county librarians even find it difficult, apparently, to persuade volunteer librarians to adopt simple uniform methods. This may be weakness on the part of the county librarian; the extra work and difficulties which result are nevertheless apparent.

The employment of paid part-time centre librarians would not be any solution, however. On the contrary, the small sums that would be appropriate would not generally attract people of any greater suitability, but the fact that payment was made would serve to eliminate some of the very best volunteers who do the work as an act of social service and would resent being paid or offered payment.

On the whole there must be continued reliance on a considerable body of volunteers. But at a later stage we will indicate some ways in which their work can be strengthened and improved and what steps can be taken when voluntary work proves unsatisfactory.

Most centres are open only for one session of two or three hours each week (though others are open more frequently). Normally they are open in the evenings though war-time conditions have in places created preference for daylight hours (not always practicable with school centres or with volunteers working during the day). Some school centres open immediately after school time. Most county libraries insist upon there being a regular opening period but occasionally this is not achieved, though it would seem an obvious essential.

This limited opportunity for visiting the centre—however unavoidable it may be—cannot but be prejudicial to use. How many people can be sure of being free on one particular evening each week? When they are not they must borrow by proxy or go without books. Moreover, unless they are allowed to borrow more than one or two books at a time there must be frequent instances when they finish their books days before they can be changed or alternatively when they

cannot finish their books until it is too late to change them. Bad weather or indisposition may also affect their use of the centre.

Generally the books at the centres are kept in bookcases—sometimes, as should be the case, provided by the county, sometimes provided by local effort. Elsewhere, however, no proper accommodation exists, the books being kept in the boxes in which they are dispatched. This must make choice difficult and awkward and is to be deprecated.

Books are sent to centres from headquarters by one of two methods—in boxes dispatched by van, rail, carrier, etc., and from a library van which calls at the centre to enable the local librarian to make his selection. When they are sent in boxes it is usual to ask local librarians to submit beforehand lists of books they desire included in the next consignment. This is useful up to a point but, in so far as their lists represent requests from individual readers, if these are in too high a proportion it may follow that the resulting collection will be deficient in general appeal. Selection from the travelling van which displays perhaps two or three thousand volumes is much better, provided the collection carried in the van is well chosen and kept fresh. The van picks up the books that each centre has finished with, these being incorporated in the van's stock if in good condition and so become available for the next centre visited. Therefore the quality and condition of the stock displayed deteriorates as the van continues its journey. It would seem, therefore, that the van should not visit more than four or five centres without returning to headquarters (or regional library) for replenishment.

In at least one county the books at the centres had to be called in and returned to headquarters *before* the new consignment was sent. As this deprived readers of any books for perhaps two or more weeks it was obviously an undesirable procedure.

Books at centres are generally exchanged three or four times a year. Occasionally exchanges are even less frequent than this, but, on the other hand, in a few cases fresh consignments are sent at shorter intervals. One county exchanges the smaller centres every month. As a rule exchange is carried out regularly, but at two counties visited the books were changed only when the centre librarians so requested—surely a dangerous temptation to the inefficient librarian to allow his centre to become stagnant and useless.

The number of books at each centre is on the whole far too small. The average appears to be between one and two hundred. In a few instances it is as low as 40-50. Bigger centres and those in the better provided counties have, of course, many more.

Inadequate stocks cannot promote good reading or give satisfaction to readers. Take one typical centre of 150 volumes—90 fiction, 30 juvenile, 30 non-fiction, changed every four months. If the average reader reads one novel a week and one non-fiction book a fortnight, this means that he needs 17 or 18 novels and 8 or 9 non-fiction books in that period. It may be possible for him to find, from the 90, sufficient novels that he is willing to read for lack of anything more suitable but it is extremely unlikely that he will find 8 or 9 non-fiction books on matters in which he is interested. Moreover, if there are, say, 50 borrowers, the stock available for choice at any time is still further reduced. The evil effect of inadequate stocks is, however, to reduce the *quality* of those supplied, since it is necessary to cater for the lowest common denominator of user. The better counties are alive to this danger; elsewhere it is too easy for the centre to degenerate into an agency for the distribution of trash. The position is aggravated when such books as are provided are divided between two, three or more small general centres in a district that would be much better served by a branch or one large centre. This dissipation of resources is too frequently encountered, small collections being sent here and there—to the women's institute, the miner's institute, the school, the church and the chapel. Assembled in one place the stocks might offer some choice; as it is they are feeble and of little use. Local sectional

jealousies and vested interests and lack of control by the librarian are the chief causes.

The individual reader is of course catered for in all counties by some system of personal service, usually postal. As a rule this service is given direct to and from the reader and not through the centre. The quality and extent of this service varies considerably. In a number of counties it is excellent. The stocks available at headquarters are comprehensive and up to date and, as use is also made in this connection of Regional Bureaux and the National Central Library, it can truthfully be said that here the individual student can get what he asks for. The limitations of the service are, however : (A) He must know what he wants. The best counties are equipped to help him even if he does not know what actual books he requires but states the subject and type of treatment ; the worst are not so equipped. (B) He lacks facilities for personal choice unless he is able to visit the headquarters library, which may be many miles away. (C) There is little bibliographical guidance available ; the book-lists published by the County Libraries Section (and also those issued by certain county systems) have proved very valuable, but they do not go far enough ; and the backward counties do not use what is available. (D) The borrower has to pay postage—at least when returning the books, if not both ways. It was pointed out that to refund the return postage to borrowers would involve keeping innumerable small accounts. This does not seem a valid argument as the Post Office " Postage Forward Parcels " scheme could be used. It was also generally argued that the borrower did not object to paying the postage—on the contrary he was glad to get the service at the price—and that in any case it did not amount to sufficient to be a deterrent to use. Of this one may have doubts. In any case it seems inconsistent with the ideals of librarianship that those using the best and most valuable type of service should be financially prejudiced, compared with those who use the least valuable. There is the further limitation—which will only disappear when the service is uniformly developed and generally appreciated throughout the country—that probably a majority of potential users of this individual service do not know that it exists.

Whatever the reasons may be, the extent of the individual service is not, saving in the exceptionally good counties, impressive. When we remember that these individual issues represent *all* the books used by readers who are not content with the very limited selections available at small centres and perhaps a few inadequate branches, we cannot feel that the work in the counties quoted below, for example, is as yet adequately developed.

In County " A ", with a population of over 100,000, there are only 260 individual readers.

County " B ", population well over 300,000, sent only 800 books by post in a whole year.\*

In other counties the number of special students' issues per 100 of population per annum were 0.2 ; 0.9 ; 1.3 ; 1.7 ; 2.5 ; and 3.0. By way of comparison another county, of not more than average development, issued 17.5 students' books per 100 of population. We surely cannot have a high opinion of the educational and cultural work of a county which, excepting the centre supplies, only issues two books per 1,000 of population in a year.

The great deficiency of the county service (saving in those few counties with good large branches and with book provision generally above the average) is that it is either too much top or too much bottom—i.e. special individual requests and common denominator reading. The provision of good sound general material of medium appeal is less satisfactory. This defect is shared by most small urbans and will be discussed later. In this connection, however, it is suggested that much could be done if the individual service were not, as is usual

\* To set this figure in its proper perspective, there is one Scottish county much smaller but immeasurably better stocked which itself borrows as many as 800 volumes from the Scottish Central Library for Students.



at present, limited to special material and "students'" books, but embraced the widest possible range of material, including even the better type of fiction. The quality and quantity of centre provision should be improved—and anything and everything which it is not practicable to send to centres should be available through the individual service.

Travelling libraries are used in a few counties and would seem to be highly successful when operating in appropriate districts, i.e. those with scattered population.

The travelling library—a van in which a stock is displayed and available for selection (similar to or the same as the van used for direct centre distribution) may operate in one of two ways: (a) it may go on regular days at prearranged times to small places where it acts as an actual centre. It has the advantage of offering a much wider selection; it brings the reader into direct contact with a trained member of the county staff. The van can also be used to deliver and collect books for individual readers. It cannot thus serve any but small communities, however, as there would be too much congestion. Moreover, its value as a distributing centre is minimised because it must necessarily be at many places during the day and often at inconvenient times. These problems are not incapable of solution granted sufficient vans and staff and an intelligent arrangement of the journeys and the hours of working. (b) The van can call at the houses of isolated readers much as the travelling tradesman often serves his customers, or make brief halts at recognized rendezvous. This delivery can be successfully undertaken by the same van that is doing centre exchanges. For example, one of the Lancashire County vans, in addition to supplying 77 centres, in one year made 46,476 direct issues to families in outlying parts—striking evidence that the van is both economical and immeasurably more advantageous to the reader.

There is a further type of service used successfully for serving small, scattered communities—the "Borrower Distributor" system. Here any reader who agrees to share books with his neighbours can take as many as he needs for this purpose. His house becomes, in fact, a small informal centre.

Having regard to the various and manifest advantages of library vans—whether as "travelling libraries" or for the transport of books and supplies to centres and branches—it is most surprising that of the 26 counties visited only 7 have their own vans (some of them only suitable for delivery purposes).

To return to the question of staffing centres, the ideal is to secure the maximum contact between the reader and the trained assistant or, failing that, the fullest supervision of centres by trained staff. At present the best results would appear to be achieved when (a) centres are served by paid full-time assistants sent out from nearby branches, (b) centres are served by paid full-time itinerant assistants who staff, in succession, a number of centres and (c) by the full use, in appropriate conditions, of the travelling library.

These methods should be extended considerably. This would involve the employment of many more assistants but that is a necessity which we must accept.

Supervision of centres is often unsatisfactory. There are centres, even branches, which no one from county headquarters has ever visited. On more than one occasion I had the doubtful privilege of accompanying the librarian on what was, through no fault of her own, her first visit to long-established branches. The experience was salutary, to both of us. Frequently newly established centres are visited on the first opening days and not afterwards unless perhaps some serious difficulties arise. Until the county librarians concerned are given adequate assistance and proper travelling facilities we can expect no better. Whereas most county librarians are given a car allowance (though the war has reduced the mileage to a minimum) there were two or three county authorities among those visited still so ignorant of the needs of the library service as to refuse this or equivalent facilities.

In contrast we have the example of two counties, where the Regional Library

system is well developed and where the centres are not only served from the Regional Library but closely supervised by Regional Library staff.

The regular meetings of volunteer centre librarians organized in some counties (though the war has stopped many such meetings) are to be encouraged, as also is the issue from headquarters (noted in two places) of regular interesting informative bulletins for volunteer librarians.

## BRANCHES

Under present conditions it is, as stated previously, difficult to distinguish between the large centres and the small branches. Nevertheless, whatever they may be called there were, according to the 1938-39 Report of the County Libraries Section (excluding a small number of counties from which information was not obtained) only 352 places in county areas in England, 16 in Wales and 92 in Scotland (460 in all) with either whole-time branches, part-time branches or centres with over 2,000 volumes (and one cannot assume that all the part-time branches have as many). In England there were altogether 129 whole-time branches, 172 part-time branches and 51 centres with 2,000 volumes or more; for Wales the totals were 5 whole-time, 10 part-time and 1 centre over 2,000; for Scotland 28 whole-time, 43 part-time and 21 centres over 2,000. This does not completely indicate the paucity of fair-sized distributing points because a large proportion of the branches and big centres are to be found in quite a few better developed counties. Two-thirds of the English branches were in ten counties. Of the English counties, 21 had no whole-time branches, 16 had no part-time branches, 12 had no branches either whole-time or part-time, and 9 had no branch or centre with more than 2,000 volumes! Of the Welsh counties, 7 had no whole-time branches, 8 no part-time branches, 5 no branches at all and 4 no distributing points whatever with more than 2,000 volumes. In Scotland, 18 counties were without whole-time branches, 13 without part-time, 11 without any branches and 4 without any distributing points with more than 2,000 volumes.

Some progress has been made, despite the war, since those figures were published, but it is mostly in the authorities which were already developing. In general, provision for small and large urban congregations remains seriously inadequate.

This condemnation does not apply to all the counties. Of those visited there was perhaps only one, a small county, where every one of the few sizeable places has a good branch. In one or two others there were only one or two townships as yet unprovided and in others the situation was well in hand and but for the war it was only a question of time before complete coverage was achieved. At one other, though the provision of good libraries had been long in starting and much remained to be done, the newly erected branches were among the very finest buildings for this purpose I had seen in this country or America.

One county library authority has definitely adopted, and started to implement, a policy of providing a whole-time branch with whole-time paid staff at every place with a population of 2,000 or more. Other county libraries fix the normal minimum as 3,000. As information is not available as to the provision made at all small towns throughout the country we cannot estimate the percentage which is properly served; obviously it must be small. Even when we consider municipal boroughs and urban districts (within county areas) with a population of 10,000 or more the position is found to be very bad. Of approximately 239 such towns only 118 (slightly less than half) have full-time branches. Of the 121 towns without full-time branches, 27 have populations between 20,000 and 30,000, 9 have populations between 30,000 and 40,000 and 2 have over 40,000. Some of these towns have part-time branches, some have inadequate centres, some have virtually nothing. These totals do *not* include the places excluded from the county library area.

Of the systems visited the worst from the point of view of branch provision

(as in most other respects) served a large population congregated mostly in townships, many of them quite large and where living conditions were such that there if anywhere a really first-class service was a vital necessity to social well-being and individual sanity. There are in this area 8 towns with populations of 10,000 or more (3 of them over 28,000), and 7 more over 3,000. In only one place (less than 10,000 population), where an old independent authority had been taken over, was there a branch. Elsewhere reliance was placed upon very poor centres and poverty stricken miners' institutes. It was stated in other counties that though miners' welfare institutes are not ideal for library purposes they can be satisfactory if properly staffed, supervised and stocked; it was not possible, however, to visit such places, so the use of miners' institutes as a class cannot be condemned, but I must condemn nearly all of those I saw in this and its neighbouring county. With one or two exceptions they were definitely dirty and smelly; most of them unfortunately had some books of their own, a survival of the days when the institutes devoted some funds to book purchase—a practice which has died since the county library began to operate, though the county has afforded no adequate substitute. The word "unfortunately" is used advisably because none of these books were of any use and most of them were unpardonably filthy. In one place a couple of hundred county books were submerged among 6,000 books which had been withdrawn from various municipal libraries as unfit for further circulation and sent to the institutes in response to an appeal seven years before. One can imagine their condition.\*

Another town of over 30,000 population in this county was served by four little centres and 250 volumes sent to the institute which, in a tiny room opening out of the gallery of an empty swimming bath, housed its own collection of miscellaneous junk and a bound set of Hansard from 1901! This had been used once only, when opponents of the Member sought to discredit him out of his own mouth.

The best one of these institutes, apparently completely dissatisfied with what was being done for the town, had refurnished and restocked a large room at its own expense; the county blandly continued to send 250 poorish novels, though its obvious course was to send a good non-fiction collection to balance the fiction amply provided locally; unfortunately it had not the books nor the money to buy them! The policy of the County Education Committee (which expended 2½d. per head on its library service) was avowedly to utilize only schools, institutes and similar existing premises as distributing points. The county librarian exercised no sort of control whatever over these so-called branches; most of them she had never even seen.

The neighbouring county had no proper branches (excepting a very good one at the headquarters town) and also relied upon miners' institutes, 43 being used. Of those seen, though one or two were dirty, others were reasonably well run and in one new institute there was a very good, well-stocked library room—but it could have been very much better had it been staffed by a trained member of the county staff. Here also the county librarian had no control over the branch staff or branch operations.

In another county there are no special branch premises. As an example of the standards adopted, one large urban district with 18,000 population was served by two small school centres run by volunteers and a third, also in a school, with 1,000 volumes in locked cupboards managed by a part-time librarian (a teacher) who is paid £50 by the U.D.C. Altogether for 18,000 people only 4,000 volumes are available.

By way of contrast a neighbouring county has a good branch in every small town except one, all but one of them served by trained, paid county staff, some of them in excellent, specially built libraries, the others in well-adapted premises.

\* Libraries should *never* give away books withdrawn because they are no longer fit for normal circulation.

Everywhere the stock is ample, well selected, frequently changed and in excellent condition.

In one of the large counties there were, a year ago, 53 areas big enough to require branches in special buildings served by trained staff; there were then only six such buildings and four such staff. Since then, despite the extreme difficulties of war-time, an able and uncompromising new librarian has, with the support of a committee now alive to its position, opened a number of temporary branches.

Another large and not dissimilar county has 16 full-time and 5 part-time branches; compared with other areas it is well developed and progressive—yet the librarian estimates that for adequate coverage a total of about 60 branches is needed.

A third large county with extensive mining areas has 5 branches (3 of them large and excellent) and needs another 12.

To pass to a very different type of area: one thinly populated, mountainous county has for many years enjoyed a joint scheme for the one sizeable town and the whole of the county area which contains no other place with a population exceeding 3,000. At two places small part-time branches staffed by volunteers have been established and it is hoped shortly to open 10 more whereby every place of 800 population or more will have at least a small library room. The whole service is operated from the town library; staff and stock are freely interavailable for town or county. The town raises a 3½d. rate; the county makes a grant of £1,250 (equivalent to 7½d. per head). Although the area is a very isolated one and its total resources are very small the service given—with the inspiration of a keen librarian—is excellent and immeasurably better than the county could give alone.

Most branches should serve as “District Libraries”—that is to say they should be available to all those residents in the surrounding neighbourhood who would surely have other occasions—shopping, business, amusement—to visit the place. In this way the limited supplies of the village centres can be well supplemented. Differential rating often prevents this desirable co-operation between branch and centres. At other places, however, the idea is well established; it should be generally adopted. These district libraries should also supervise the neighbouring centres, which could then be run in every way in close association with the branch.

The additional work of serving people in the neighbourhood, which may be a considerable proportion of the total, will moreover often justify the maintenance of a bigger branch than would be reasonable were its use confined to the place itself. All readers would benefit by the larger stock, better staff and longer hours.

A branch which, probably in addition to serving individuals from the district who visit it, also acts as a distributing centre to the service points in the adjacent countryside is called a Regional Branch. Though the system has not yet been widely adopted (chiefly because of the evil influence of differential rating) its advantages are generally recognized. Each Regional Branch in the area serves a number of centres; it is provided with a reservoir of stock from which the centres can be supplied; the centre librarians can visit the Regional Branch to make their selection and conversely the librarian in charge of the Regional Library can visit the centres, supervise their work and generally secure closer co-operation and co-ordination than is otherwise possible. Where the county is large or communications with county headquarters difficult, the Regional Branch will probably enjoy better and more economical transport facilities. In one most successful county a travelling library is allocated to each of the two Regional Branches. Even where the county is compact and communication with headquarters is easy there still remain several advantages—that the stock and operations of exchange can be decentralized, thus relieving headquarters (and perhaps reducing the

accommodation needed there and which, being in a big town, is probably more expensive to secure and maintain), users of the regional library can see a large stock, it is easier for centre librarians to choose their books, and especially, as already noted, more intimate personal contact can be established.

Generally speaking, therefore, Regional Branch services are to be desired and should form an integral part of any reorganized library service. Too often, however, the present division of library responsibilities between a number of authorities prevents the proper development of the system. The obvious centres for regional libraries are frequently already independent authorities and consequently other smaller and less suitable places must be chosen by the county. There is at least one instance of a small independent urban library acting, by arrangement, as a county regional branch. The full extension of this practice cannot, however, be secured until the service as a whole is properly re-oriented and formed into proper service units.

The definition of a "district branch" in the County Libraries Section Report of 1938-39 provides a striking commentary on present stupidities: "Branches situated in market towns or other shopping centres, and open to residents in the (surrounding) area served by the town, *although possibly excluding the town itself*, should be described as district branches". In other words, the town itself has its own library which no non-resident may use, so the county must duplicate!

Many county branches, small and large, were visited. Without being cynical it would appear that when county authorities do things at all they usually do them decently—for scarcely without exception the branches seen were well kept and the condition of the stock much above the average for either small independent urban libraries or urban library branches. Evidence of great enthusiasm, much thought, good taste and considerable ingenuity were frequently encountered. This does not mean that they were all good and original; on the contrary, many were too small, some were standardised and ordinary in their fittings—but they were all clean and active.

Many of the branches in the smaller places were in adapted premises. Usually these were regarded as temporary—until "proper" libraries could be erected. The best, however, showed clearly that, however desirable it may be, a "proper" library is not always essential. The next generation of librarians will most probably need for various reasons to limit their building to essential, and especially to larger, premises for which convertible buildings are unlikely to exist, even if these were desirable. Moreover in the initial stages of post-war development we shall be wise to use as much of our available income as we can on books and staff. Therefore we should note the satisfactory and economical nature of some of these conversions, most of them infinitely superior, in appearance and everything else, to the drab over-large Carnegie and similar libraries with which many little townships are saddled.

Shops have been used frequently. Provided they are large enough and are attractively if inexpensively fitted they are most successful. Being shops they are usually well situated; if, as should be, the windows are left clear and used for display, passers-by are attracted. As often as not the rooms behind and above have been rented with the shop so that these branches have ample storage and staff space. To describe only two—"A" was formerly rented to a chain store firm and is right in the centre of the main street of a little market town. Seventy-five per cent. of the small population are registered as readers; though part-time it issues 900-1,000 volumes a week. The inclusive rent is £30 per annum and it was completely decorated and fitted with brightly painted cheap wood shelves, small counter and lino for £100. "B", adjoining a bus stop, costs £20 per annum for rent and rates. Shortly before the visit it had been repainted by the staff who had thus spent two enjoyable Sundays—a deed to be commended if not recommended—and it was altogether a warm, snug little place. In less rural parts of the county such premises would of course cost considerably more;

nevertheless they are effective service points preferable to any but specially planned libraries equally well sited.

Other satisfactory conversions include a front room in a private school, opening directly to the street ; a church hall ; a former literary institute ; a chapel ; a market hall, and a house (used also as a reserve book store). The two most striking conversions were, however, the fine Elizabethan barn which has been restored to form the beautiful Manor Farm Library at Ruislip (Middlesex County) and the Dronfield Branch of Derby County on the ground floor of a one-time private residence which now houses the U.D.C. offices. Delightfully fitted out in black oak, with a spacious entrance in which book exhibitions are displayed, the structural alterations, furniture, fittings and floor coverings cost about £600—and the result is much better than all but a very few specially designed libraries. Another good conversion is the Herne Bay Branch of Kent—where full advantage has been taken of the ample, large-roomed premises originally housing a Post Office and Sorting Office.

Discussion of the design, planning and architectural features of library buildings is being purposely omitted from this report—for limitations of space as well as because they were not matters of which detailed consideration was possible. Nevertheless the following buildings are listed as being representative of good practice and worthy the study of librarians interested in any building projects. Those marked \* made a special appeal to the writer.

Lancs.	Thornton*, Broughton, Carnforth.
Derby	Staveley.
Notts	Beeston, West Bridgford.
Durham	Billingham.
Lanark	Bellshill.
Kent	Gillingham.
Middlesex	Southgate*, Wembley*, Uxbridge.

The list is not, of course, complete.

Some of these serve considerable populations, for example :

Bellshill, with a stock of 17,000 (accommodation for 10,000 on the shelves) serves an industrial population of some 30,000. The daily average issue is about 1,000.

Gillingham, stock 25,000 (with 1,000 reference and about 6,000 juvenile), with one whole-time shop sub-branch and three centres, provides for a population of 70,600.

The central library at Southgate, one fine large room with an area of 7,500 square feet and a stock of 19,000, together with two existing branches (and a third projected) affords reasonable facilities for the 67,000 residents.

The Wembley Central—a most striking example of modern architecture—has a similar area and stock. There is one existing branch and two more are needed as the borough is a large one (120,000).

At Uxbridge (42,000) the Central forms part of an imposing, centrally placed block of council buildings. Again it is one large composite room (excepting that there is a separate reading room and a local museum)—area 9,000 square feet. There is one branch.

These examples are of particular interest because they illustrate that the county authority can, given the will, make provision for large urban areas in no way inferior to what is done by good independent urban councils—quite apart from the most important fact that behind the county branches are the various county headquarters services and stocks. Admittedly the counties have not yet met all their obligations to such areas ; for example, one large urban district with a population of 184,000 is as yet served by only one branch, though the plans had, on the outbreak of war, been passed for four further branches and a central library for the borough and the county—but that is another story.

## BRANCH STOCK

There is still too great a tendency, in the less progressive libraries, to allow branch stocks to remain static and become stagnant. As the chief virtue of the library being a county branch is that it shall have a constantly changing and varied stock, the best county libraries have definite arrangements to ensure that no book shall remain at a branch when it has outlived its usefulness there, that all are in good condition and that, through the system of interchange and the constant supply of new material, the reader shall have the opportunity to see and read a large, varied and representative range of books. Usually the smaller branches have a part exchange every 3, 4 or 6 months; at some large branches the entire non-fiction stock, saving only items definitely still needed, is changed at frequent intervals, though most fiction can well be left at a large branch throughout its "life". Elsewhere it is the rule that for all books (new publications, replacements, etc.) sent to the branch an equivalent number must be returned to headquarters. In one or two cases a definite sum is allocated to each branch for new publications and replacements—though, of course, the actual books are interchangeable.

Owing to almost invariable limitations of space the counties have avoided the prevalent urban fault of having too many books on the shelves. Largely because of this the physical condition of county branch stock is generally very much above the urban average.

## STAFFING OF COUNTY BRANCHES

Five or six of the counties visited employed only qualified whole-time paid staff at their branches—the appropriate qualification for the Branch Librarian being usually regarded as at least the Associateship of the Library Association, no matter how small the branch. In two or three other cases, though all staff at whole-time branches was whole-time paid, part-time unqualified persons were still employed at part-time branches. Elsewhere there was too much reliance upon unqualified, often unsuitable, persons. This was especially noticeable where there was differential rating and the local council was allowed to influence the appointment. Certain counties, however, despite differential rating and local committees, have rightly insisted that all staff selection and control shall be in the hands of the county.

The following haphazard list will show the sort of people who are engaged as part-time assistants in charge of part-time county branches: telephonist, parish clerk, chemist's wife, music teacher, teacher, stationer, retired grocer, retired woman school teacher, wife of the Chairman of the U.D.C., the Secretary for Elementary Education assisted by his staff, a woman clerk in the food office, etc. Many of these part-time assistants are enthusiastic and intelligent people, doing their best more for the public good than for the small wages paid. Nevertheless, all county librarians refer to their limitations and it was generally possible to see at a glance whether part-time or whole-time staff were at work; in the former case the libraries were more often untidy, the stock neglected, the books not in proper order, and one missed the little details of housekeeping (such as keeping books flush with the front of the shelves) that every trained assistant would observe as a matter of habit. The outstanding disadvantage, of course, is that which we mentioned in connection with centres—though here its effect is more potent—i.e. that these people have not sufficient knowledge of books or of the resources and methods of their own headquarters and of other libraries to assist readers needing help or material beyond their local resources.

Proper methods of staffing part-time branches were, however, also illustrated: (a) the employment of trained whole-time assistants who divide their time between two branches each open part of three days per week (there being two such assistants on duty), and (b) staffing by assistants from nearby larger branches. More could be done if there were co-ordination of existing independent areas. Undoubtedly this type of staffing is made difficult by the distance between branches

and sub-branches. The assistant may have to travel several miles. For many other purposes as well, a great deal more must be spent on travelling allowances and the like. It is absurd to say that a branch cannot be properly staffed because the staff cannot go there conveniently; the necessary arrangements have got to be made even if they do cost a few shillings a week.

Numerically the staff at whole-time branches seemed adequate as a rule. Most staff time at such branches is at present devoted to direct work with the public and this has its busy and slack days and periods. Consequently, to give full and varied employment to assistants sufficient for the busy periods, it is very desirable to attach to branches activities which are not dependent on when they are done or which can be carried out in quiet hours. For example, there is room for much more work with children both at the library and at the school (see Ch. VIII) and we have already discussed the work of regional branches and service to centres.

### DIFFERENTIAL RATING

Before passing from the consideration of branches we may appropriately consider a practice which has exercised much influence thereon. When the county library service was in its infancy it adopted (with the mistaken support of the 1927 Report) the system of differential rating. The basis of this system is that the service to be provided from the county library rate should be limited to headquarters service and the supply of books to centres, etc. If any area desired a further service (comparable with that given in an independent library area) it was believed that this extra cost should be borne by the locality concerned, a special, additional rate being levied thereon to cover extra costs. Generally these costs cover the provision of any necessary premises and fittings, and their upkeep and maintenance, and the salaries of any paid full- and part-time staff, but sometimes other costs are also regarded as a local charge—e.g. the provision of reference books or periodicals.

Today the most progressive authorities have abolished differential rating, or are doing so by gradual steps, or propose to do so. The majority of county librarians agree that it is undesirable.

In the first place it is based upon an assumption, which is open to challenge, that an efficient service can be provided for more thinly populated rural areas, even those where special premises are unnecessary and impracticable, at a cost below that necessary in more thickly populated areas.

This has implied not only that there need not be considerable staffing and distribution costs in an effective rural service, but also that the *per capita* book provision can be as low in the rural as in the urban districts. Differential rating has thus been a potent factor in limiting rural service; it has labelled it as a "cheap" service. The privilege of paying more for a better service which differential rating has given to the urban areas has been denied the rural residents.

Differential rating has indeed been an evasion of responsibility by the larger authority which was given library powers as much because it was expected that it would exercise more vision than the small area as because the larger unit of service (which differential rating serves to break down) was necessary. The responsibility has been passed back to the smaller components. Many of the latter have assumed it gladly and effectively. But many of them refused it. As a result there are many urban areas which should definitely have proper library premises with paid staff but remain content with totally inadequate voluntary centres.

There is no clear legal decision whether a county can compulsorily levy a differential rate without the consent of the area. In practice the county would be very reluctant to exercise such powers. Therefore, in effect, when there is differential rating it rests with all areas themselves to decide what quality of service they will have, if any.



Once differential rating has been applied to one area within the county the position is aggravated and the inefficiency consolidated, because it becomes manifestly unfair for the county to give anything but a minor service to areas which will not pay when payment is being accepted from others.

Even among differentially rated areas we find the widest range of provision ; indeed we have every reason to expect it. In one typical county the amount of the differential rate ranges from .078d. to 1.875d.

Two further evils arise. In the first place when the locality expends its own funds in addition to the county rate it expects to have some control over its own local system. This control must militate against the efficiency of the county service as a whole, weakening the authority of the county committee and county librarian, and hindering co-ordination of stock and staff. Some differentially rated places have the right to appoint their own staff who become primarily the servants of the local authority and not of the county. As a rule such staff have not been as well selected or suitably trained as they would be either by a sound county authority or by the average completely independent authority ; the fact that trained county headquarters staff were presumed to be available for supervision and the performance of technical duties has led to the fallacious idea that trained staff of the right calibre were not so necessary at the differentially rated branches.\*

Apart from the effect of this local staffing upon the system it is not good for the staff itself. We must agree that wide experience is desirable, and that it is a good thing for the branch assistant to know something of the work at headquarters and of the other types of service. This experience cannot be gained unless all the assistants form an interchangeable part of the whole county staff. Moreover the individuals may be denied opportunities for promotion which would otherwise be open to them.

The second evil is that frequently a new set of internal artificial barriers is set up. Readers living in the smaller places should obviously have full access to the larger branch collections, maybe in adjoining places to which they go to shop or work. But under differential rating not a few local authorities insist that their "own" libraries shall be open only to their "own" residents. One can understand the logic of their attitude while deploring its effect. Often, therefore, the rural resident is denied access to the branch library at his very door ; sometimes he has to pay a subscription ; sometimes the county authority bribes the local authority by increasing the book supply or making some other concessions.

Finally, differential rating prevents or makes more difficult the proper co-ordination of the elements in the area. For example the differentially rated small town may be admirably suited to serve as a Regional Library. Occasionally this has been secured by preferential treatment by the county in return for Regional services rendered ; but if, for example, differentially rated units are not staffed by assistants properly under county control, fully satisfactory results are unlikely. As has already been noted, however, there are counties where, despite differential rating, the staff are the employees of the county and are under the county librarian's complete control—an obvious necessity.

#### LOCAL COMMITTEES

Where a district levies a differential rate it should necessarily have a local committee to control its local expenditure—though where its functions end and those of the county library committee begin must be vague and debatable. Elsewhere a library committee can have few duties ; one may argue that a local

\* This has had a particularly undesirable sequel in one large county. Here differentially rated areas have, after a few years, contracted out of the county, becoming independent library authorities. The persons in charge under the old regime (who may or may not have been suitable, and adequately rewarded, as county branch assistants) have now become chief librarians of the new authorities despite the fact that these are large enough to require the services of chief officers of quite different calibre.

committee helps to maintain local interest but this is unlikely to be important unless the committee has sufficient work to maintain its own interest. A working committee of people who will take turns of duty and ensure staffing when the regular volunteer is ill or not available may, however, be very useful in small centres.

#### COUNTY HEADQUARTERS SERVICES

Reference has already been made to the students' service (or "special request", or "postal" service—it is variously named) by which specific books or books on specific subjects are sent to readers from headquarters (clearly the books are not necessarily *at* headquarters—they may be in the hands of readers or in the stock of branches, etc.—in which case the headquarters machinery enables them to be transferred or reserved and sent when available).

Any books in the county stock are (provided they are of what is regarded as a suitable type) available for individual readers. Nevertheless those books of a more specialized character most likely to be required in this way are frequently segregated from the more ordinary stock used for everyday centre exchanges. This is partly for convenience, partly because those readers who can visit the "students'" library at headquarters are encouraged, or at least allowed, to do so. Unless the headquarters town is fairly large or much frequented by residents in surrounding areas, this personal use of the headquarters collection is not extensive; where the town *is* large it should possess a large urban library which would surely serve the visitor better if he were free to use it and if it were strengthened, as it economically could be, by a pooling of resources. In any case if there are good books available in the town it is illogical to debar those who live in that town from using them. Until this amalgamation is secured the county cannot be blamed for providing its own collections—but there can be no doubt that the system is extremely wasteful. Even where the postal service is well developed the average use of more specialised material cannot possibly be as high as it would be in a good large urban library. Clearly many books of this type could be shared.

The existence of large branches naturally serves to reduce the stock kept at headquarters, the librarian then wisely sending to branches material which there can be seen, handled and borrowed, but yet is available when wanted elsewhere. The county librarian needs to keep at headquarters a sufficient reservoir for exchange purposes, and also certain books of insufficient general appeal to justify their being sent to branches; otherwise the fewer books he keeps at headquarters the better if they are books that will be used (or which should be displayed and available) at the various service points. There are, of course, steadily accumulating stocks of books which have fallen out of use—and the good county librarian is rightly resolved not to put on his limited branch shelves books which do not justify their presence. Counties collect "reserve" stock more quickly than urban libraries because of their necessarily large duplication. Often they are drastic in weeding it out; nevertheless much must be retained. Two points arise: firstly, whether it is necessary to keep all this material in the headquarters premises in the headquarters town. If accommodation can be secured at the same or only little greater cost the point does not arise; sometimes, however, it would be much cheaper—and would relieve congestion at headquarters—to house it elsewhere, as at least one county has done. Secondly—a wider issue perhaps—much of the county reserve is duplicated in the storerooms and on the shelves of urban libraries in the area, if not actually in the same town. Much unnecessary expenditure on premises and maintenance would be saved if the various "reserves" could be consolidated.

The "students'" stocks (the term is used for want of a better as comprising all those items which the average county does not normally include in the stocks sent to centres and small branches) at several counties were excellent, including a

wide, up-to-date range of advanced material, particularly strong in subjects of local concern (agriculture, mining, technology, as the case may be). A few had fair music collections though nowhere was there an outstanding music library. Most had large collections of plays (often issued in sets to dramatic societies and play-reading circles). Generally, considerable provision was made for adult classes. Occasionally, less as part of the library service than as a convenience for the Education department, sets of school texts and "readers" were housed and circulated. One library had a fine collection of framed pictures for circulation to schools and branches (and used for decoration). There were several glaring exceptions to the rule, however, where the books at headquarters were inadequate and of a poor type, of little value to serious readers.

Without exception, it is believed, the county librarians were able to select and purchase stock without reference to any committee, but in one case at least this authority was limited to books costing less than 15s. and another librarian stated that the finance department would query any books above that price—an impertinence that the librarian felt it politic to tolerate.

#### REFERENCE AND INFORMATION WORKS

Obviously county systems do nothing in the way of providing large collections of material, available for use on the premises, comparable with the bigger urban reference departments. Apart from any other reason the only sensible locations for large reference collections are the big towns which are already supposed to have them; duplication would be unnecessary since non-urban residents are freely admitted. There are objections to this situation. If the urban library, as it too often does, fails to provide a good reference service for the area the county residents suffer as well as those in the town, but the county is powerless unless it is prepared to duplicate extensively and provide its own reference service (no such example was seen). Secondly, even if the urban reference service is good it is naturally built up to meet, first and foremost, the needs of its own residents. By and large this may not matter, but whenever there are demands peculiar to the county resident and not required by the urban, the county resident may fail to get what he wants. Thirdly, except in the great city reference libraries, urban reference service usually involves the use not only of books in the reference department but also of available lending library stock; as the county headquarters stock is not available for this urban reference service so must the reference work suffer (for both urban and county residents). Finally, the county does not contribute anything to the urban reference service and it is surely a sound general principle that all normal forms of provision should be paid for by the communities using them (though not necessarily in strict proportion).

However, that is not the only kind of reference service, so far as the counties are concerned. Some reference books should be found in all branches and centres. At most of the good county branches there are small suitable collections of quick reference books. More than this is not practicable or necessary.

But where branches are not yet in being, though centres and postal services may exist for circulating books, there is no reference work whatever. Thus there are very many fair-sized towns where nowhere can one find even an atlas, a good dictionary, a Bradshaw or a local directory. Some reference books (e.g. a dictionary, Whitaker's Almanack, an atlas, even popular books like Pear's Encyclopedia) should be available at *every* centre no matter how small. It is very exceptional to find them. Surely it is lamentable that material of such everyday utility is not accessible everywhere (though of course the present brief hours of opening would limit its use).

Reference books at branches and centres must necessarily be limited. Just as the reader at even the smallest place may require *any* book, so might he need any kind of information. Is there any adequate machinery to provide this? No. Most counties will handle requests for books *on* a particular subject (when

readers cannot name actual books) but nowhere is there anything comparable with, say, the reference service at California State Library, which will, in response to enquiries from readers in rural areas, look out and send either the books, etc., containing the required information or transcripts, photostats, etc., of the appropriate pages.

Some such system must be developed if the reader in the county small town is not to be compelled to make special journeys to a big town (and this would more often than not be either impracticable or not justified by the nature of the enquiry). With the usual honourable exceptions the county systems lack anything approaching the necessary resources and staff for this work. Some are even so badly deficient in bibliographical tools that it is difficult to see how they can help readers who need books at all out of the ordinary run; probably they pass on their difficulties to Regional Bureaux and the National Central Library—but the fact that they do not set out to give this service prevents it being sought to anything like the potential extent.

County library work with children is considered in Chapter VIII.

### COUNTY LIBRARY BOOK STOCK

Stock is in general maintained in very good physical condition—in which respect the county service is ahead of the urban. In the best provided counties it is also of sound quality. Two expectations were confirmed, however—where the amount expended per head of population is low this is usually accompanied by inadequacy of service points and the stocks provided at them are insufficient, yet the proportion of cheaper, more popular and less advanced material is high.

Statistics of the number of volumes provided per head have, throughout this study, been treated with considerable reserve as they are meaningless unless one knows the quality and condition of the stock. Nevertheless when the figures are exceptionally low there is clear evidence that, whatever the quality, the supply is grossly inadequate. Actually in all the cases of low stock *per capita* the quality is also poor. Where little is spent the relation of stock *per capita* to expenditure *per capita* on books is surprisingly close, as the following tables (of 1938-39 figures) show:

	Approx. stock in 000's.	Exp. <i>per cap.</i> on books <i>p.a.</i>	Vols. in total stock <i>per cap.</i>
A.	65	1d.	·26
B.	55	1d.	·30
C.	49	1·7d.	·34
D.	39	1·7d.	·34
E.	88	1·8d.	·28
F.	99	2d.	·34
G.	74	2d.	·36

On the other hand the number of books in stock per head bears much less relationship to expenditure per head where the latter is higher.

H.	450	4·4d. (4·4)	·56
I.	76	4·5d.	·83
J.	416	4·9d. (4·9)	·50
K.	277	4·9d. (6·1)	·63
L.	66	5·0d. (5·4)	·88
M.	184	5·5d. (5·8)	·68
N.	166	6·0d. (6·1)	·55
O.	96	6·5d. (7·7)	·55

The expenditure figures in brackets are those for the year 1941-42 where known.

For this there may be many explanations—the extent to which stock has been weeded out, the number of branches, the method of purchase, etc.—and it

would be unwise to draw conclusions. There is, however, a tendency for the larger systems to have fewer books per head in relation to expenditure which would suggest that the smaller systems are unable either to expend so high a proportion of their funds on more expensive items or to secure as big a turnover as the larger systems.

The point of importance that emerges, however, is that, on the evidence of the survey, all those libraries with a high expenditure *per capita* are good and *vice versa*. The figures for 1941-42 are given for the second group not only because they illustrate the remarkable progress made despite and yet because of the war, but also because it is most significant that some of the systems which were among the best before the war are those which have made the most striking improvements since. This, we believe, is a general rule of library service—that nothing succeeds like success.

### HEADQUARTERS PREMISES

Of the 25 county headquarters visited only 4 were in premises specially built for the purpose (if one may include as such the mansion and the bank refitted and considerably extended to form the excellent headquarters of Devon and Lanarkshire). These four, i.e. Devon, Lanark, Cornwall and Fife, all possess good, well-planned premises, capable of expansion in years to come. The increased facilities of such premises, which enable the various operations to be performed in a proper sequence with a minimum of unnecessary labour, must more than compensate for any additional cost there may be at the outset. Indeed one had the impression that the makeshift adaptations generally found were far more expensive in the long run, though sometimes rents are merely internal transactions as the property belongs to the county council.

Of the remaining 21 county headquarters visited only one (in an old school) was regarded by its librarian as affording sufficient accommodation.

These premises ranged from huts and outbuildings, a wine merchant's storeroom, a garage, a conservatory, houses, chapels and basement rooms in county council offices, to rooms once forming part of an independent library now incorporated in the county system.

In two cases the work of headquarters was divided between two buildings ; in another a big reserve stock was housed in a converted house some miles from headquarters, though this was not a serious disadvantage in itself. Several of the librarians are to be congratulated on the skill with which they have made the most of unsuitable premises. One remembers in particular the Scottish county library in two large dark rooms, one a basement, in the county offices (and which would have been replaced by a new headquarters library but for the war), which were kept in beautifully clean, orderly condition. But, by way of contrast, there was the county headquarters of one of the oldest systems which was so crowded with books in untidy disordered heaps that it must have been impossible to find anything.

### COUNTY LIBRARY METHODS

Though the writer, as a municipal librarian, would hesitate to suggest what methods should be adopted by county librarians, he gained, as an impartial observer, the strong impression that these methods varied too much from county to county. Things were often being done in one county which another librarian had either decided not to do or had abandoned in the light of experience. Undoubtedly conditions vary but allowance is made for this. Perhaps strangely, perhaps not, those counties with the least adequate staffs seem to be those keenest to struggle with processes which better provided libraries had discarded. One thinks in particular of the records kept and of the lists, catalogue cards, etc., sent to branches and centres. Good records are essential, but few records can be justified if the cost of the time spent in keeping them is demonstrably greater than

the costs which would arise if they were not kept. There would seem to be need for a co-operative re-examination of such matters; it might well lead to freeing staff for more constructive work. To cite two instances (without prejudging them) a few counties keep lists of books sent to a centre and when sending new consignments check them for perhaps two years or more back to avoid sending books that have previously been sent; is this likely to happen so extensively and frequently that it would not be cheaper to have duplicate items returned by post and to send substitutes? Again, the value of the elaborate records of the location of books at centres and branches (sometimes even including fiction) must depend upon the type of book normally sent and the number of branches and the frequency with which items are required by individual readers. There is wide difference of practice also regarding records sent to centres. Typed lists, in duplicate or triplicate, book cards in duplicate, catalogue cards—each or all of these may be sent. Which of these are really wanted, or alternatively would something else be better? Frankly one doubts the value of sending catalogue cards to small centres.

Charging methods at centres and small branches vary, even within individual counties, in some of which at least three "official" and numerous unofficial methods are in use—ledgers, sheets, ruled cards, card charging, etc. The elaborate ruled sheets introduced in the early days in several counties are still used and are definitely bad, involving very much unnecessary work. Indeed, there seems no reason why card charging should not be universal. With this most county librarians agree but several advanced the argument that local volunteers either could not be made to understand the system or induced to adopt it—surely a striking commentary on the quality of voluntary service.

A point was raised in two or three places which is not without significance in relation to suggestions for the centralized provision of supplies. It is that where the county librarian is compelled to get his supplies, fittings, etc., through the county supplies department, delays and inefficiencies are all too frequent and vexatious.

## STAFFING

All but a few counties are badly understaffed. Reference has already been made to branch staffs. We are speaking here of the staff at county headquarters.

The headquarters work of an active county is not only responsible and varied, calling for the employment of qualified personnel; it is also extensive and arduous. At headquarters are conducted all general administrative and secretarial duties for the entire system (excepting where there is regionalization), and all book selection, accessioning and cataloguing, work with individual students, with adult classes, etc. There is also the never-ceasing task of arranging exchanges for branches and centres, and, if this is to be properly related to the needs of readers, each place getting balanced appropriate selections which include items specially asked for, it is not a purely routine operation, but one calling for intelligence and interest. A large headquarters may handle 10,000 volumes a week in such exchanges. The books must be packed and dispatched and necessary records maintained. Where there is inadequate staff the quality of the work suffers; the best things are of necessity scamped; the assistants are oppressed by the constant rush of attempting to cope with an inexorable time-table; when they fail exchanges become delayed. Unfortunately the traditions of pioneer days have died hard in too many counties.

The number of total county population served per member of headquarters staff is a rough indication of adequacy—but it is not a definite guide; on the one hand headquarters staff in terms of total population can reasonably be smaller where there is regionalization or where there are many large branches, on the other hand it naturally should be larger in the smaller counties. Of 25 counties, 2 (small) have one headquarters assistant (apart from the librarian) for each

12,500 of population; 10 have one assistant for between 20,000 and 30,000; 7 have one for between 30,000 and 40,000. But 5 have only one for over 40,000 and one (a medium sized badly developed county) has only one per 62,000. One county has only three headquarters assistants apart from the librarian; 3 others have only four.

### COUNTY STAFF SALARIES

The salaries paid in the counties are on the whole low. The too general maximum for senior assistants is £200-£225 per annum. There are, however, a few authorities whose practice shows appreciation of the professional qualities necessary, as in their employment senior assistants may rise to such reasonable levels as £345 and £375. At the opposite extreme are a few authorities which employ *no* genuine seniors—at least there is no pretence at paying for senior work. Junior assistants start at as little as £39 (even £26 for non-“School-leavers”) and normally proceed to an average of £150-£160; occasionally the scale will carry the junior to about £220; sometimes it stops at as little as £100. To these war bonus is usually now being added.

The chief librarian is in particular most inadequately paid. The county library movement is to be congratulated that, despite the low salaries offered, it has attracted several men and women of great ability and enthusiasm; elsewhere it has failed to do so. Comparisons between county and urban conditions are invidious. Yet it was apparent to the writer that, especially during the period of development from which none of the counties have yet passed, county work calls for organizing and administrative qualities and personal abilities of a very high order. The duties of a county librarian are much more varied than those of his urban colleague; he has a wider range of contacts with local authorities, a more complicated machine to administer. No doubt urban librarianship also makes its own demands, but the writer would emphatically deny that the county service, by and large, can be properly served by librarians of any less calibre. Yet, though the rewards of urban librarianship are far less than they should be, the salaries of county librarians are relatively still worse. The minimum salary of £300 upon which the C.U.K.T. insisted, no doubt guided more by expediency than justice, is not reached by at least 12 of the smaller counties (none of which, it is agreed, should have independent existence), where salaries range from Goldsmithian riches upwards. In at least 3 of the 26 counties visited (2 of them by no means small) the librarian still started at £300; at one this was also the maximum, but in the other 2 cases the maximum was £400. Four receive £400, 2 £450 and 3 £500. Of these 12, 5 are men—so the prevalence of low salaries cannot be attributed to the employment of women (not, of course, that it is admitted that there *should* be any differentiation of this character). When considering these salaries we must remember that there are urban authorities where unqualified junior assistants can pass to a maximum of £300. The complete stagnation of the service in such counties can only have been averted because capable young people adopted the work in its early days in the unrealized hope that it would grow up.

To some extent this failure to recognize the value of county librarianship is due to general lack of appreciation of libraries on the part of the county councils concerned. It is, however, also due to the subordination of the Librarian to the Director of Education, and the resulting utterly fallacious assumption that the latter would provide such driving power, supervision and even professional guidance as would compensate for the absence of these qualities in an underpaid librarian. As we know, however, the good directors have left the librarians alone to do their own job while none of the bad ones have contributed anything to the progress of the library service.

Despite the low rewards of the county librarian the disparity between his or her salary and that of the next senior member of the staff is most marked.

Only a few county librarians have adequate deputies ; of these only one or two are paid salaries commensurate with their duties. Every chief officer should have immediately under him an officer capable not only of acting in his stead but of relieving him of a large part of the routine administrative work of the system. It is recognized (though not frequently observed) that the urban deputy librarian should receive at least 60 per cent of the salary of his chief. In only two of the county cases examined was this proportion attained. In several cases the officer next below the chief received as little as £200.

In general, too, county libraries lack officers capable of acting as supervisors of branches and centres. There should be constant contact by a responsible headquarters officer with the many service points. At present "visiting" has to be done by the chief librarian or his deputy—and neither has sufficient time to do it at all adequately.

Two or three counties have scales for *county branch librarians* graded according to the size of the branch. In one county there are five grades ranging from £160-£205 for branches serving 10,000 to 20,000 population, to £360-£450 for branches serving a population greater than 70,000. These grades are much better than the average. Unfortunately scales of about £150-£250 are usual. The lower rates found occasionally are manifestly insufficient to secure suitable persons.

#### COUNTY STAFF—QUALIFICATIONS

As a rule county authorities insist upon approved initial educational standards and upon professional qualifications. Grading is generally contingent upon passing Library Association examinations. Where this insistence upon professional training is linked up with adequate salaries scales (e.g. at Ayr\*) no possible criticism can arise ; frequently, however, the relationship is ludicrously unfair. In one county until three years ago junior assistants had to pass the Intermediate before they could earn two pounds a week.†

#### COUNTY LIBRARY GOVERNMENT

The Public Libraries Act of 1919 places the control of the county library service under the county Education Committee.

This means that county library affairs are governed by a library sub-committee of the Education Committee (or sometimes by another sub-committee—e.g. the Higher Education Sub-Committee—which may further delegate library matters to a sub-sub-committee) and that the county librarian is not a chief officer but one subordinate to the chief officer of the Education Committee (the County Director or Secretary of Education). It was apparently the intention of those responsible for the Act thus to secure a close alliance between the educational and the library services—a policy further strengthened by the practical consideration, the advantages of which are generally now questioned, that the most likely distributing points and voluntary librarians in a county scheme would be the schools and the teachers. After some 20 years' experience of the system we are in a position to consider it impartially and critically. Has it achieved the intentions of its promoters ? Has it led to the development of the best possible library service ? Should it be continued—and extended ?

Most county librarians agree that in the early days when the idea of a county service was new it was, if not necessary, at least expedient. They say that unless

\* The Ayr County scale, for all library staff, is in three sections :

- (a) £55 by increments of £10 and £15 to £225.
- (b) Associates of the L.A. to receive an increment of one step and on reaching the maximum of (a) to proceed by further increments of £15 to £285.
- (c) Fellows to receive an increment of one step and on reaching the maximum of (b) to proceed by further increments of £15 to £345.

† The crowning injustice is provided by a Scottish town which has recently decided that no assistant can go beyond £75 without the Intermediate. When passing this drastic resolution the committee cannot have been unaware that no member of its staff was eligible even to sit for this examination.



the education committee had been the responsible body there would not have been any general initiation of library services. As we cannot know how far county councils would, in fact, have adopted the library Acts had they had to appoint an *ad hoc* library committee, or know how the libraries would have prospered under such auspices, the matter is one for conjecture only. We cannot say that some counties could scarcely have fared worse—because some urban systems, with independent library committees, are still much worse than even the worst county system.

The fact remains that, with one or two exceptions, county librarians have privately informed the writer that they are emphatically convinced that the disadvantages of the system far outweigh its advantages. Strangely enough the county library service has suffered hardly at all from the danger of which the critics of 1919 were most afraid—i.e. that the county library service would become predominantly an educational service with a bias towards the provision of books for children. On the contrary, a few county libraries have so vigorously evaded this danger that their service for children is far below that afforded in most urban libraries!

The serious objection to subordination to the Education Committee is that there *is* subordination. Education Committees have *not* sought to make the library service subservient to the educational service; few have exploited its possibilities as an ancillary. They have, on the whole, treated libraries as a minor, accidental function. The cost of a library service is small compared with the cost of education; library duties represent but a small part of their whole duties; little time has been available for the consideration of library matters. Our chief objection is thus simply that on the whole county education committees have not been sufficiently interested. We agree that many urban library committees fall under the same indictment. But those who desired control by the education committee hoped for control by a wiser and more influential committee than the average independent library committee was assumed to be.

The above may seem ungenerous. Let us hasten to express our appreciation of the admirable work of those education committees which *have* been alive to their responsibilities. Without their understanding and enthusiasm the county library movement would display but a dead level of mediocrity or worse. The best county library systems have all enjoyed the support and motivation of good education committees. The bad ones might equally well have suffered from bad library committees. The essential point is that experience has not shown that there is that close affinity between library work and educational activities which makes the former part of the whole, but that the subordination of libraries by making them appear relatively less important has prevented proper appreciation of their values.

The subordination of the County Librarian to the Director of Education has in some instances been even more stultifying. Many county librarians paid the warmest tribute to the assistance and friendship extended to them by their directors. Frequently the subordination is largely theoretical; the wise director, realizing that librarianship is not his province, has left the management of the system almost entirely to the county librarian, though he has always been available to give help when it was needed; his influence has been at the disposal of the librarian, but he has not in any way interfered with the work of his librarian colleague. Such experiences, by no means rare, demand our gratitude. Nevertheless, it is not unreasonable to ask whether this collaboration and assistance would not be equally possible between two chief officers equally responsible to their respective committees. Most urban Librarians will tell you that it is; most will readily acknowledge help and support, from their urban Director of Education or their Treasurer or Engineer, perhaps all the more effective because they are born of friendship on equal terms and of a mutual desire to promote the well-being of the community they both serve.

But though, equally, the Borough Treasurer who does not appreciate libraries can be a thorn in the flesh of his Librarian colleague, he cannot be so effective a hindrance as some apathetic and even hostile county Directors of Education have proved. There are unfortunately instances where the work of the county librarian—even the appointment of a qualified librarian—has been prevented through the apathy or hostility of the education officer. In one county recently visited (and one where the library service was lamentably bad) the librarian was treated as an inferior junior official; she was not allowed to interview or even to write to her own chairman. Such an attitude is, of course, exceptional. On the whole relations are good. But a system which permits the operation of such evils cannot be regarded as satisfactory, especially when we can find no good reason for its continuance.

### THE SMALLER COUNTIES

Financial aspects of the county library service are discussed—with those of urban libraries—in Chapter XI. Before passing on to consideration of the smaller urban libraries, however, it is appropriate to remind ourselves afresh that all county authorities are not large. On the contrary. If a town of under 20,000 or thereabouts is not judged capable of maintaining an independent service surely a county area of similar population is even less so. Yet, though the C.U.K.T. has consistently and rightly set its face against making grants to small libraries it has given help to every county with *under* 25,000 population. Though small urbans could be urged to combine with the counties of which they were a geographical part, larger groupings of the counties of small populations would have involved reorganization on a much wider basis—one wider, as a rule, than the amalgamation of two or three contiguous county areas. Such wider amalgamations must be faced. There are certain areas in Great Britain where a sufficient population can be embraced only by the formation of extensive regions centred upon big towns perhaps distant from parts of the region.

Meanwhile let us note what provision in the small counties actually means. The following table gives total expenditure and total expenditure on books as obviously *per capita* figures alone do not tell the whole story.

The following figures relate to the year 1938-9:

No.	Pop.	Tot. Exp.	Tot. Exp. on books.	Tot. Exp. <i>per cap.</i>	<i>Per cap.</i> Exp. on books.	Rate in £ levied.	Product of 1d. rate.
		£	£				£
A.	3,572	90	25	6d.	1·7d.	1·0d.	87
B.	8,303	156	64	4·5d.	1·8d.	0·5d.	215
C.	21,370	1,828	1,171	1s. 8d.	13·0d.	4·0d.	515
D.	29,723	649	303	5·25d.	2·4d.	1·125d.	578
E.	27,706	361	133	3d.	1·2d.	0·33d.	702
F.	29,969	630	145	5d.	1·1d.	1·0d.	681
G.	34,977	581	100*	4d.	0·7d.*	1·0d.	651
H.	42,811	750	103	4d.	0·6d.	1·5d.	406
I.	56,560	1,193	717*	5d.	3·0d.*	1·3d.	864

\* Including binding.

Clearly, apart from inability, only one of these counties (C) was seriously attempting to do its best. The rest are simply "not trying". These are typical examples. Let another condemn itself from its own Annual Report: A population of about 30,000 is "served". The number of books in stock is 18,959; 166 juvenile books were added during the year. Book issues were 36,134. "The areas throughout the county continue to show considerable difference in their use of the library. One centre has over 2,000 issues, 2 have over 1,300 . . . 27 areas have less than 100 issues (per annum) and of these 8 have less than 50."—i.e. there are 8 places, however small, where not *one* single reader borrows one book each week!

## CHAPTER IV

### URBAN LIBRARY SYSTEMS

#### LIBRARIES IN SMALL INDEPENDENT AREAS (TO 40,000 POPULATION)

A majority of the independent urban library systems in Great Britain serve places with less than 40,000. Special attention was paid to these small town libraries in an endeavour to learn something of the standard of service given and its limitations. Forty-five such libraries were visited. As already emphasized, there are probably libraries in each group which were not visited and which might have proved better than the best seen; equally there is the likelihood that worse examples might have been found. Those seen were not "selected" for visit; they were visited because they fell within areas which the writer explored. Though he has only described things he has seen he has also studied a great mass of material, questionnaires and reports relating to other libraries, and there is much evidence that the libraries visited can be regarded as representative.

#### (1) *Independent libraries serving populations of less than 10,000*

There are 106 places in this group, which may be sub-divided as below:

Population under 1,000 .. .. .	5
Population between 1,000 and 2,000 .. .. .	10
Population between 2,000 and 3,000 .. .. .	18
Population between 3,000 and 5,000 .. .. .	23
Population between 5,000 and 10,000 .. .. .	50

Of those visited not one gave a service in the least comparable with that given by small county branches in similar places. The best of the group was in a small drab township in Scotland, but the stock, though passable, was dull, and much mended, the over-large premises unattractive and the staff of two untrained. At the worst, in Yorkshire, there was only a back room in which a few tramps sat peacefully round a good fire. At another practically the only usable current books were good type non-fiction and fiction obtained on loan from the county in return for service to neighbouring villages and books purchased a few years ago from a C.U.K.T. grant.

At a fourth, run by a part-time elderly tradesman, with some assistance from two girls, the lending library was filled to overflowing with a hopeless jumble of shabby tattered books with not the slightest vestige of order. The method of book purchase was to go to sales and buy up odd lots for a few pence, presumably to secure the "plums" and throw the rubbish away; but the rubbish never had been thrown away and the "plums", if any, were submerged in the chaos. The "methods" adopted were primitive. There was no open access, even to the few books hired from the county—the only presentable items to be seen.

#### (2) *Serving populations between 10,000 and 20,000*

The 12 examples seen include one excellent library (Kendal, where there is a combined system for the borough and county of Westmorland to which reference has already been made), and three where the stock is sound, the premises satisfactory and the administration obviously capable. None of the others provides a satisfactory stock (even having regard to the size of the library); they have little current non-fiction, while fiction and juvenile books are dull and dirty. Three rely chiefly upon county loans but get only current fiction. One was situated in a slum suburb of a large city; the librarian, who is making a brave effort, expressed the wish that the library were incorporated in that city's system and a visit to the adjoining city branch, also in a poor area, provided such a striking

contrast, with its excellent up-to-date stock, that one had to agree. Another is in a very small room in council offices, open very irregularly. The worst is unbelievably dirty and houses a large collection of books, not one of which was fit to be handled without gloves. But among the many notices displayed was one so appropriate that it demands publication:

"Complaints have been received from borrowers that books have been defaced and not kept clean. The Committee request that all borrowers co-operate with the Librarian in keeping all books clean and free from defacement. Will any borrower finding any book *in this condition* please report same to the Librarian immediately, when steps will be taken to trace the offender."

Only four provided any useful reference service.

One of these libraries is in the same town as a very good county library headquarters (though the latter is a little way from the centre of the town).

### (3) *Serving populations between 20,000 and 30,000*

In this group, of the 13 examples seen, only two are reasonably good libraries. Two others, while far from satisfactory, are at least in the hands of young librarians who are trying to make the best of old buildings, drab stocks and bad traditions of support. The others only present variously the more depressing and undesirable features of an ill-kept and ill-cared-for institution. "A" occupies an old dreary building in a very poor quarter of the town, next door to what looked like a common lodging house; its stock is not dirty and there are some new books; but the branches provided by the county in the adjoining district are representative of an entirely different idea of library service—beautiful, well sited, admirably stocked. "B", in an old unattractive building, clings to antiquated methods including a really filthy indicator used for charging the junior books. These are not less filthy than the indicator; so were most of the adult novels. The reference library consists of two small cases of quite useless items.

"C" shows evidence of an attempt to keep the stock clean but the building itself, in a back street in a very poor town, would seem to have defied all efforts.

At "D" a newly appointed young man had started to clean out the Augean stables before he was taken into the army. He had succeeded in obtaining and cataloguing some good non-fiction, but the fiction and juvenile books were dirty and the whole place hopelessly crowded; no reference books; only two assistants, both untrained.

"E" was dreary if clean and decently kept; the adult stock was dingy, though there was quite a fair representative non-fiction collection. But the juvenile stock made one ask whether the public health department was not asleep.

"F" contains a few shelves of new books purchased with a recent gift of £100 from a local firm, but little else that is useful or clean. There has been no attempt to classify the non-fiction. The library had but recently been made "open access" but it was doubtful if any reader wanted access to such stock as he would find.

"G" is in old, unsuitable premises badly converted to open access, but so crowded that there is no room for a counter, the old indicator being still used for charging purposes. The lending stock is poor and higgledy-piggledy. The reference library includes various bequests of valuable old material which are quite wasted where they are.

"H", an ancient borough on the outskirts of a big city and still clinging to its independent state, possesses an oldish, not altogether unsuitable building, which houses a wretched stock which is, however, surpassed in wretchedness by the museum upstairs.

"I" is in a dreary small room in offices in a side street in which are a few cases of fiction and a handful of unclassified and useless non-fiction. Opening out of this room is a smaller one forming a juvenile department. As is unfortunately the case in all backward systems, the children's books are much

dirtier even than those provided for the adults. There is no proper counter; the single-handed librarian is untrained. The few books that are added are bought when in a decrepit condition after use in commercial circulating libraries and then rebound. There is also a branch (not seen) in better premises but, I was told, with similar stock and staffing. Such provision is evidently considered by the local authority as adequate for a town of 20,000.

Of the two good libraries in this group, one is in an historic county town at which are situated also the headquarters of the county system. This is an outstanding instance of absurd duplication. Although the general lending service has not been neglected and is indeed very good for a town of the size, special attention has clearly been devoted to the local collections—books, manuscripts, prints, museum collections. Better or more thorough work in this field has not been seen anywhere.

The other, in a prosperous market town, has recently been improved by a competent young librarian. The premises, which are quite suitable, are very well kept, and the stock, though in the process of being "built up", is clean and well selected. Nevertheless this library could very well serve as a Regional Library forming part of a bigger system. The town is the natural centre of a wide rural area.

(4) *Serving populations between 30,000 and 40,000*

There are 58 library services falling into this group. The 15 libraries seen are unusually divergent in quality because the best are really good. These are Perth and Dunfermline in Scotland, Pontypridd in Wales, and Kidderminster in England. All four enjoy the services of keen and capable librarians, this resulting in clean, well-arranged premises, sound, well-chosen stock and a general air of efficiency and purpose. It is such active libraries as these which have in the past provided the arguments in favour of maintaining the independence of these medium-small authorities. No doubt there are several other examples—and no system of reorganization would be desirable that did not recognize their value and achievement and seek to increase their sphere of influence rather than to limit it.

Nevertheless there are certain features which make present achievement possible but which also may militate against further development. Only one of the four has any branch service (though in two it is certainly needed); the librarians have wisely concentrated on doing well the first and most important part of their task—but this does not mean that the rest has not to be attempted in due course. Only one has any loan charges to bear (and here they are small). None pay good salaries to their assistants. Two enjoy substantial funds from endowments or trusts (in one case equivalent to nearly 12 per cent of the total expenditure). Two expend over 2s. per head of population. One raises a rate of nearly 4d., another of 3d., a third of over 2d., plus a substantial contribution from the county.

Of the remainder, two must be regarded as reasonably efficient. "A", in pleasant, well-kept premises, with one branch, houses a clean, moderately sound stock, though the reference department is poor. The salaries are bad. This library is another example of duplication as it is situated in the same town as the headquarters of the county—though this is a very backward county system, affording no proper facilities for visiting students.

"B" has a well-arranged, if oldish, central and a pleasant little branch. More could with advantage be expended on books and salaries, however. This town forms part of a large incoherent area served by a multiplicity of authorities of varying inefficiency and where clearly a co-ordinated system is most desirable.

"C" is fortunate in possessing excellent premises (which include a really delightful art gallery), but the stock is oldish (juvenile dirty) and the library is

grossly understaffed (Librarian and two assistants only). No branch. It is near a big town and should form part of its system.

"D" is a poorish suburb of a big city. It expends only 8½d. per head and though the librarian is obviously doing her utmost to keep the stock clean and neatly patched up, there is nothing like enough spent on books. The staff is much too small and ill paid. Branches are needed—at present there are only tiny delivery stations.

"E" is in a very poor township and spends only 1s. per head. None of the staff have any training and the library is unclassified and has generally an air of inefficiency. No branch, though one is needed.

"F" is a very scattered, poor area where branches should be provided (but there is only one small centre open twice a week). The premises are shockingly ill kept and the condition of the stock is appalling. The librarian (untrained) has only two assistants and all salaries are seriously inadequate.

"G" comprises two widely separated townships and a few smaller centres of population (mining). Obviously it is not a coherent entity but a part of the county. Unfortunately it is certain that this county would not at present do even as much as is now being done by the independent authority. There are three distributing points; one in newly erected premises, one (the Central) in a wooden hut, the third a small centre open twice a week. The two first are open only four nights a week. They are staffed by part-time untrained but very keen and capable men, with voluntary assistants. One must pay a tribute to their fine work—but they are the first to urge the need for qualified whole-time staff and proper premises. The stock is very good but unclassified; the central premises very busy but crowded. The council refused C.U.K.T. grants. The expenditure equals ½d. per head.

"H" results from the amalgamation of two townships which have, however, retained two independent libraries each with its own librarian, committee, stock, etc. Only one of the two was seen as the other was closed. It is old but very pleasantly situated; much of the stock is shabby and dirty but there is also some good new material. It was obviously a mistake to continue the two independent services; indeed the place is well situated to form a good county Regional Library.

At "I" the library is housed in imposing council premises, unfortunately right on the outskirts of the borough; at least two needed branches are lacking. The interior does not, however, live up to the promise of the exterior; the lending stock is very poor, the juvenile absolutely poverty-stricken, the reference department completely derelict. And—just across the road is one of the best county library headquarters in the kingdom!

"J" occupies cramped, dreary and most unsuitable premises on the ground floor of council offices. A new librarian was (before he was called up) trying to improve matters, but with an expenditure of only 9½d. per head little had been possible. There is no storage space and the poor stock is made even less attractive as rows of dreary reserve stock are shelved above and below a thin ribbon of current material. There is no branch, though one is needed.

At "K" a keen and well-trained librarian has been able to make his presence known by the quality of an insufficient stock. The reference department in particular is well organized and active. But the premises are shockingly unsuitable—an old institute situated behind shops with a most meagre entrance and comprising a series of dreary wooden rooms "heated" by old-fashioned stoves.

#### LIBRARIES IN MEDIUM-SIZED URBAN AREAS (40,000-100,000)

There are 119 independent urban library authorities serving populations between 40,000 and 100,000.

This is an appropriate point at which to refer to a matter which is of considerable significance. It is that all independent urban authorities do not

serve communities which are so distinct and separate that we can rightly refer to them as "towns". When we think of a "town" we naturally think of a thickly populated area comprising a shopping centre and commercial nucleus surrounded by industrial establishments and residential areas, inner and suburban—a place with a unity, life and history of its own—a place, for example, like Worcester, Sunderland or Sheffield.

We all know that, with expansion, the original towns have become built up right to the boundaries of neighbouring authorities, once perhaps rural but now completely urbanized, and that around them extensive suburbs have sprung into existence. But do we realize how many of the independent authorities serve not nucleus towns but the areas surrounding such places? This is most important if we are to appreciate the real problems of library service, since clearly a genuine town is in a different position from an area which is but an artificial part of a larger unit over only the centre of which the nucleus authority exercises any local government powers.

To make this clearer we have therefore divided independent urban authorities into (a) genuine towns, including the central elements in all larger urban areas, and (b) those which are contiguous to these and with them form larger units; some are "suburbs", some are industrial areas. This division discloses two surprising features—firstly that though *most* of the *smaller* authorities do serve genuine small towns, the proportion of category (b) places increases in the larger population groups; secondly that the proportion in (b) is high.

Thus :

Population Group.				Proportion of Independent Authorities which serve suburbs and parts of larger units.
10,000- 40,000	..	..	..	18 per cent
40,000-100,000	..	..	..	37 per cent
Over 100,000	..	..	..	44 per cent

On the other hand about 3 per cent of the independent "urban" authorities serve not closely knit towns but collections of several scattered smaller urban areas.

#### (5) *Serving populations between 40,000 and 50,000*

There are 38 such systems in the country of which 18 were visited. They vary from the very good to the very bad. Two of the central libraries are in good new buildings; a third, though older, is ample and spacious; a fourth was almost completely destroyed by high explosive, though the staff are carrying on in what remains.

In this group Folkestone demands special mention. Here, since the war, conditions have been exceptionally difficult, for reasons we need not specify. A keen committee and a good librarian have, however, maintained a maximum service which has been of great benefit. The amount of reading per head of population has more than doubled since the war. As more recent figures are abnormal, in 1938-9 the expenditure per head of population was 2s. 2½d. (a 2½d. rate), of which 7½d. *per capita* was expended on books and binding. The central library is an oldish building but a post-war scheme for reconstruction should produce satisfactory results. Meanwhile it is not unduly crowded, its chief lack being a children's department (which is not, of course, necessary at present). The stock, both as regards condition and quality, is one of the best seen in any comparable library. The new main branch, a large open room above a clinic, is very well planned and stocked.

Three good Scottish libraries in this group illustrate the effect of the 3d. rate limitation (see Ch. V.). One of them reaches the limit but 1d. goes on art galleries and museums, so that the library gets a maximum of a 2d. rate; one—tell it not in Gath—considerably exceeds it; the third is only ½d. short.

In addition all three receive contributions from their counties (because of double rating, a matter to be explained later), so that all are in fact spending considerably more than the maximum 3d. rate (and, ironically, *raising* still more, as the counties do not return anything like all that is raised in the burghs). None have any loan charges. All three have one small branch each. They are three efficient services with stocks well above the average; one spends nearly 8d. *per capita* on books, the others approximately 6d. But all are somewhat understaffed and the salaries paid are much below proper standards.

An English coast town with a good new building houses a lending stock which is too large and inclined to be shabby. Only 4½d. *per capita* is expended upon books and binding. This figure, low though it may be, is higher than in many places, but it is not enough to enable full use to be made of such premises.

Little need be said in detail of some six others. These are in old premises, congested, in a poor state of decoration (and difficult to decorate), doing much good work but hampered by insufficient money to keep the well-used stocks up to date and in really good condition. One of them is over-stocked and dirty. In another remarkably good use has been made of general literature and of technical books of a good type but insufficient money is available to keep them clean; here the reference department contains much scholarly material which is out of place in that district and is thus little used. A third possesses a good reference collection in a fine large room but the lending stock is in very bad condition.

Apart from these six, two of the others, in neighbouring urban districts, provide a striking contrast. Both serve scattered incoherent areas which are but artificial portions of a bigger industrial region. "A" has a small central in promptu rooms in a council building and five small part-time branches. A new librarian, temporarily replaced by his wife, has recently reorganized the service; the stock at the central, though small, is really attractive. Four of the part-time branches (three in hired rooms, one in a shop) are staffed by part-time untrained people. For the central and the remaining branch only four full-time assistants and one part-time worker are available. "B" has a well-kept Carnegie central library and two pleasant older branches. To manage all three places there are only the Librarian and two assistants (all unqualified). The very poor stock is unclassified.

The central library at "C" is in two small rooms in council buildings, shockingly crowded, but with no possibility of providing even separate sections for children's books or reference books, no store room, no work room, no office for the Librarian, no place for the staff to hang up their coats. A new librarian has started to revise the previously wretched stock but newer and larger premises are absolutely essential.

To visit "D" was a tragic experience. A large part of the product of the library rate is given over to various miners' institutes which expend it without any control from the librarian or library committee—a procedure legalized by a clause in a Tramways Act! The public library proper—not that it *is* very proper—must subsist upon the remainder. It occupies very bad rented premises, which have recently been sold over the heads of the sub-tenants from whom the council rents them—in every sense a fortunate happening as no other premises could be worse. Downstairs are *two* dirty news rooms frequented by even dirtier tramps. Upstairs is a small ladies' room and the lending library, which also acts as librarian's office and staff workroom. It is too small to permit of open access. Borrowers line up in the passage and come to a hatch in the doorway. It is most surprising that so many people use it. Proper library work is impossible. The book stock is unclassified. The librarian and her three assistants are grossly underpaid, though they deserve every praise for their brave efforts to keep some sort of a service alive under such conditions. About 1d. per head is spent on books. Such things should not be.

"E" is a shocking place with an indicator in active operation. The main ground-floor room contains a wretched collection of useless non-fiction and rows



of dirty juvenile books, for which the children must make application after consulting filthy catalogues and lists. The grubby fiction and some poor popular travel and biography are in an "open access" room from which readers select them and bring them to the indicator to be charged. Upstairs are two grimy museum rooms completely devoid of any kind of label.

"F" strictly speaking comes in this group as it is an urban district with a population of 40,000. Actually it is a recent amalgamation of dispersed communities and the centre is a township of about 10,000, if as many. The only urban library provision is at this centre and it is bad even as the library for a town of only 10,000—a small, dirty, Carnegie library, with an elderly untrained and uneducated man in charge. The county lends a few books; there are no others worth consideration. The position here is frankly obscure. The urban district is an independent library authority, levies its own rate and manages its own library. Nevertheless it would appear that the county rate is also levied over the same area and the county has two or three small centres in the town. Information given on the spot led one to believe that the urban district apparently thinks it has to pay county rate as well as its own and that the county did not know that it was independent. The readers certainly do not benefit from this strange double "service".

(6) *Serving populations between 50,000 and 75,000*

The libraries visited include two of particular interest—Motherwell and Wishaw, and Stretford. The former expends up to the present legal limit and needs a second branch which it is therefore not possible to provide; but what is done is well done in two most attractive libraries—one, an old building recently modernized, the other a striking new building admirably situated. About 9d. per head is spent on books. At Stretford development has been recent and rapid; three branches opened within the last four or five years show interesting progressive improvements as the success of each has obviously stimulated the desire to do even better next time (this indeed is a significant element to be observed in several building programmes, e.g. Middlesex). The last, opened since the war and partly demolished (fortunately with the loss of only one department) is one of the too few libraries seen where the desire to erect the finest possible library, even if it cost a little more, has been allowed to express itself. Economy is a necessary virtue, but if it is always the only factor to be considered we may easily degenerate into mass-producing standardized efficient but institutional buildings. Fortunately a few places are being too wise to let this happen.

Another town in this group possesses a very good new central library which contains a large reference department particularly strong in local and historical material. But there are no branches (although expenditure per head is 2s. 2d.) and the lending library seems to have been sacrificed to the reference department as the circulating stock is far below the standard of the reference and includes much old and out-of-date material.

At "D" an old central library has been extended and now houses an ample lending library with a good if not exceptional stock. But the reference department is poor and there are no branches. A rate of nearly 3½d. (including museum and art gallery) produces only 1s. 6d. per head and less than 4½d. per head is spent on books (although 10 per cent. of the total book fund comes from a legacy).

"E" has a good new central library which is well stocked. This being a very scattered area, branches are necessary but they are at present only of the caretaker type, more reading room than lending department. The small staff at the central is very badly paid; and only about 4½d. per head is spent on books. But though a rate of nearly 6d. is raised, it only produces about 1s. 5d. per head of population.

At "F" the central is, if somewhat overcrowded, very well kept and the stock is clean and free from rubbish. There are two part-time branches

Considering that the expenditure per head is only little more than 1s., the library is a credit to its librarian and staff—though these are not well paid. There are no loan charges, rents or rates to be paid.

At "G" the librarian has done much to keep the large and representative stock in good condition; but there is no separate children's department, the reference library is very poor and there are no branches, though two are necessary.

"H" also has no branches. The central library is an old building in a side street, badly inadequate. The children's library is in separate rented premises opposite. Only 10d. per head of population is expended, of which only 3·3d. is spent on books. Again salaries are low.

The central library at "I" is a disappointment as it is in a prosperous town, the largest seen in this group. The lending library is a long, dark, cramped room; the non-fiction stock is plentiful and includes much good material but also much that is very old, drab and dirty. The "reference library" is an insult to the name; upstairs we find an assortment of reading rooms—a big dirty news room, a place called a "reviews" room (a name clearly intended as a tribute to the reading tastes of the more seasoned vagrants, who filled it to capacity), a "magazine room" devoid of magazines, and another at present used by a school.

Nevertheless, this small group of libraries presents a higher average than any previously described. None is definitely bad, two are poor; the others seem not entirely unsatisfactory—until we judge them by comparison with the first two.

#### (7) *Serving populations between 75,000 and 100,000*

There are 33 library systems in this group of which it was only possible to visit 7. Though none of these is definitely bad, none seems outstanding. All but one suffer from old, dreary central premises unsuitable for modern requirements; the exception has an old building but it is adequate and well kept. One of these central libraries (in a converted mansion) is very badly situated a long way from the centre of the town. Two of the boroughs are areas adjacent to a big city, of which they really form part, as they have no individuality of their own, not even a shopping centre. In *three* of the others the county headquarters is also in the same town.

To take the best first: "A" (in Scotland) has a large attractive lending library with a good stock, a pleasant children's room and a reference library which, though it houses much that is not appropriate, is above the prevailing low average of reference provision. There are no branches. Expenditure per head is nearly 2s., though only 4½d. per head is spent on books. As the 3d. limit has been reached no further expenditure is legal.

A second Scottish library, "B", has also reached the limit. It has two branches, one of which was destroyed by enemy action and has been replaced by temporary premises. The system is being managed efficiently under a committee with a genuine interest in the work, but the central premises are old and should be replaced, but this—and other developments—has been prohibited by the legal limitation.

At "C", too, there is good librarianship. The central reference department is one of the best visited outside the large cities, strong in local matters, well arranged and thorough. The large representative lending stock is clean and in good order. But the scope for exploiting the professional abilities available is seriously limited by inadequate support (an expenditure of only 1s. 4½d. per head) and a very bad central building, old, dreary, far too small and badly sited in a poor street.

At "D" the large central library, also old and dreary, in what was once a "Town Hall", has a very good lending department. Though the dislocations of wartime have aggravated the situation the reference department seems very poor; though a large city reference library is near it is a mistake to suppose that, even in such circumstances, a reasonable and appropriate reference department

would not be valuable. One of the two branches is an excellent new building of original design; the other was once a news room, now serving as a part-time lending library with shuttered bookcases. There is a third news room, also. A rate of nearly 4d. produces only about 1s. 8d. per head.

"E" also wastes money on two branch news rooms (i.e. places that are news rooms only). The word "wastes" is used advisably and would be warmly endorsed by the librarian of this and all other places similarly saddled. Yet two much needed branch lending departments are lacking. The total expenditure per head is only 9d., less than 1½d. per head being spent on books. This totally inadequate provision is reflected in the stock, though this has not been allowed to become dirty. To indicate more clearly what this poverty-stricken expenditure means—in the whole of the previous year only 3 books per 100 of population were added or replaced! At this rate to maintain stock at a level of even 50 volumes per 100 of population each book will have to last for *sixteen years*!

"F", serving a widespread area with a definitely rural fringe, is developing a good system of urban branches and of small branches and delivery stations on the outskirts, but the central is in most badly placed, adapted quarters, furnished with very old-fashioned, unattractive and unsuitable cases, etc. Much good solid work is being achieved (the book vote is moderate—5½d. per head) but a new central library, centrally situated, is urgently required. For example, the reference library is far too small for a town of that character while the apparently excellent and extensive local collections are badly housed in storage to which the public can have no access.

#### LIBRARIES IN LARGE URBAN AREAS (WITH OVER 100,000 POPULATION)

There are 77 library systems in Great Britain serving populations of more than 100,000.

In this descriptive section of his report the writer has dealt only with places he has actually visited during this survey. Where smaller towns were concerned he was able to adopt some degree of thoroughness; usually he saw and examined the stock of every department, and went to typical branches—sometimes to every branch. Naturally, however, any intensive study of the work of the larger authorities would have demanded much more time than was available.

Nevertheless he found occasion to visit 22 of these larger systems and at each was able to discuss with the chief librarian the conditions and special problems of the service and to see, at least, new or unique developments and other features of special importance. Though a good deal of information was gained in this way it is necessarily not always of such a character as to permit of general description of the systems.

Before proceeding it may be well to note that (as in the case of medium library areas) not all large library authorities serve genuinely distinct towns. On the contrary 34—i.e. nearly half—are areas forming part of a bigger metropolis (e.g. London Metropolitan Boroughs, areas similar to Salford and Bootle); one (the Rhondda) serves a scattered chain of small and medium-sized places.

#### (8) *Serving populations between 100,000 and 200,000*

There are 49 such systems of which 25 are part of larger centres of population (10 are London Metropolitan Boroughs). Ten were visited.

The Rhondda—in which case we must depart from our practice of anonymity for it will surely be recognized—is unfortunately one of the most backward areas in the country. The county "excluded" it on adopting the Acts; the Rhondda U.D.C. did not start upon its scheme until December, 1938. I most emphatically do not attribute any blame to the Librarian (whose recent death is much to be regretted), for he, to my knowledge, desired and strove for a far different type and standard of service, but the scheme is being run on completely unsound lines, in

imitation of some of the worst examples of undeveloped county libraries. The headquarters are in an old building which also houses a small branch. Otherwise service is given by sending small collections of books to a number of miners' institutes—most unsuitable places for general library purposes. Indeed, as some of the institutes refuse to admit the general public, despite the bribe of some 500 county books, the largest town in the area is completely unserved. Indeed, faith in the reality of "public" use is weakened by this notice (outside one of the best institutes, with quite a large if shabby stock of its own)—"*This is NOT a Public Library. Any person other than a member found using it will be prosecuted.*" The Librarian had no sort of control over the staff at the institutes who were completely untrained and unqualified in any sense of the word. The area is, of course, one in desperate need of outside assistance; despite the temporary improvements of wartime, the institutes are themselves badly in debt. Even though a 2d. rate is levied it produces less than 5½d. per head of population. However the situation is best to be met there is here a clear national moral responsibility.

Low rateable value is affecting the work of two other libraries in this group. "A", to secure a *per capita* expenditure of 1s. 3d. in 1938-9, demanded well over a 4d. rate. Every possible effort appears to be devoted to making the best of these limitations. There is a good new central library and two new branches (loan charges amount to about 13 per cent of the budget). The central reference stock is good and appropriate to the town, that of the lending department well selected and representative. But an expenditure of only 3d. per head for books precludes their being kept in suitable condition.

"B" raises a rate of less than 2d., despite its low rateable value, and only 9d. per head is expended, of which only about 2½d. goes on books. The surprisingly decent quality of the lending library stock (the reference library is very small) is only possible because there are no branches and the staff comprises only six members (temporarily seven). Yet £100 per annum is spent on each of four useless branch news rooms.

Were there sufficient branches also at "C" it is certain that the very good service there would not be possible on an expenditure of 1s. 2d. per head, derived from a rate of just over 2d. There are two very pleasant branches (four more being needed) and an ample and suitable central library extended quite recently. This library is outstanding for its "good housekeeping"; it is well kept and well decorated and the stock is sound and clean. There is a good reference department, with a commercial section, and a large students' room altogether appropriate for its purpose. This is one of those libraries which (even allowing for such factors as shortage of branches and poor salaries) provide exceptions to any rule that would rigidly relate expenditure and results. We can only wonder how such good, if limited, work is done with the money available.

"D" levies a 2d. rate for libraries, museums and art gallery together. Expenditure on library purposes has been drastically reduced since the war, largely to provide for "fire watchers" a sum equivalent to a quarter of the total pre-war budget. The large central library is in old and very unsuitable premises. The reference collections are extensive and this department gives an impression of efficiency and considerable use. Both the central library and the branches are grossly overstocked, especially the branches which house thousands of drab, useless, long-forgotten items. Just over 3d. per head is spent on books.

The central library at "E" is a terrible-looking, grim, black building, housing also a museum and art gallery. The war prevented a scheme of reorganization, to the bitter disappointment of a librarian who has striven hard to improve almost impossible conditions. The lending library is "closed", though no indicator is used; the reference library is a travesty; the children's room is small but much used and well stocked. Indeed, though only 3½d. per head is spent on books, the store rooms at the central house a very comprehensive stock which cannot

possibly be properly exploited. The war also stopped the erection of a third branch. At present there are two branches—one old and one new—and ten distributing stations in retail shops, looked after by the shop assistants who are paid a few shillings a week.

At "F" a recent reconstruction has produced an attractive central library, though one might criticize the extent to which general non-fiction has been placed in the reference library when it would be much more useful in the lending department. A children's department—instead of just a children's corner—would be useful as the premises are situated in a thickly populated slum area. Indeed the rateable value of the city is low, a rate of nearly 4d. only producing 1s. 6d. per head, of which only the lamentable sum of 1½d. is spent on books.

The next two both have imposing new central libraries.

"G" expends much more per head than any other authority in this group (excepting one which for very obvious reasons was not "visited" as it is the writer's own). Even *excluding* the high loan charges the *per capita* expenditure is 2s. 9d. The central library is part of a civic centre. At "H" it stands by itself as one of the best, most workmanlike large library buildings in the country and one doing a considerable amount of excellent work (despite the inconvenience caused by occupation of parts by civil defence services). One has no doubt that with so much achieved the council will proceed to improve two matters in need of attention—a *per capita* expenditure of 3·8d. on books is not enough, and a staff of seventeen is not sufficient for both this busy central and seven branches.

Book expenditure at the last in the group, "I", is also low—only 3d. The central building is dreary and inadequate and without a children's department. Of the five branches only one has a children's room. The stock is clean but on the drab side; the staff salaries are low.

#### (9) *Serving populations over 200,000*

There are 21 library authorities in this group (other than the 7 London Metropolitan Boroughs). Visits, all too short, were paid to 12.

At two of these, unfortunately, the Central Libraries had been destroyed by enemy action.

Two of the others are, compared with the remainder, badly undeveloped.

At "A" a 2½d. rate only produces 10·4d. per head. Less than 2d. per head is spent on books. The central library is the worst seen in any big town—so cramped and inconvenient that the lending department cannot be arranged so as to afford open access! Various schemes for more suitable premises put forward by a capable librarian striving hard for improvement have all been overwhelmed by local apathy. What the librarian has been able to do has been done as well as possible; for example, the lending stock, though not too plentifully enriched by new material, has been well chosen and the small reference collection is of excellent quality. The too usual filthy news room occupied much needed space. At least two additional branches are needed.

At "B" the non-fiction sections of the central lending library are also closed, though a new chief has succeeded in opening an open access room for the fiction. This is an old-established library with considerable and valuable reference collections but the old-fashioned, rambling and gloomy premises are unfitted for either their storage or proper use. Here the news room is in a separate building and displays a wide range of foreign and provincial papers, which should be valuable in a town of this character; this, indeed, is the only sort of news room we would advocate. Undoubtedly great changes will follow the new régime; yet it is a matter one cannot face with equanimity that conditions should have been allowed to remain so bad for so long.

Of the other systems in this group one can only give brief notes of impressions. They are all among the big city libraries which have done so much in the past to develop the spirit of British librarianship. Upon their continued efforts its future

will depend even more. They all face their peculiar difficulties. Four, at least, require better central premises ; another has suffered grievous damage during air raids.

All have been visited often before by the writer. What struck him most on this last tour ? At Glasgow, the extension of the Mitchell Library, proceeding, if slowly, despite the war, with special Government permission—yet another tribute to the value of libraries—and some excellent new branches. At Manchester, the very high standard of stock and service given in an old branch in one of that city's poorest districts. At Leeds, the new Crossgates Branch mentioned elsewhere. At Nottingham, the gradual reorganization of an old building. At Birmingham, the immense wealth of the great reference collections, the value of which is now recognized in a new way evidenced by the steps taken for their protection. At Bristol, the charmed life of the central, the successful arising of a new branch from the ashes of an old one and the fine spirit of insistence that even in wartime all things concerning the library service shall be done well and tastefully. At Cardiff, the excellent lending department secured by a rearrangement of a badly overcrowded central library building and the perennial youth of a "temporary" branch, and at Liverpool, the amazing but not surprising way in which the task of repairing most serious losses is being tackled so energetically even with good humour—if such a quality does not appear out of place in the circumstances. One must pay a great tribute also to those at Plymouth and Coventry, where the losses have been grave and the difficulties in the way of reconstruction remain almost insuperable. I much regret that a railway accident made impossible a brief visit to which I had looked forward—for there are always ideas and inspiration to be gained at Sheffield. I am sorry, too, that the only library system to which I was refused access was that of Edinburgh, because when I was there a few years ago I formed the opinion that it was probably the best in Great Britain.

## CHAPTER V

### SCOTLAND

Having heard since childhood that the Scots were fonder than the English of books and learning it was a great pleasure, particularly for one of Scottish extraction, to find that the present state of libraries in Scotland did not belie this preconception. So far as one can judge by visits to several and a study of the data concerning many more, Scottish libraries as a whole can be compared not unfavourably with those of England. This is all the more creditable because librarianship in Scotland suffers from two serious forms of disability—geographical and legal. Geographically—if that is the correct phrase—the population of Scotland is largely concentrated in one very large and three other considerable areas ; elsewhere the country is more or less sparsely populated with few medium sized and many very small towns.

The legal difficulties are not so easy to explain—or even, for a Sassenach, to understand. Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Dundee are local authorities comparable with English county boroughs ; they are both library and education authorities. For the rest of the country the county councils are the only education authorities. For other local purposes, including libraries, the burghs (many of which are very small) are competent local authorities. This does not mean that all burghs *are* library authorities, for they may not have adopted the Libraries Acts, Before 1918 parishes could adopt the Libraries Acts ; since then the duty of providing libraries in parishes becomes a matter for the county education committee.

The only Libraries Acts proper give adoptive powers to burghs. In other words burgh libraries (and those of the four large cities) are the only libraries in Scotland operated under Libraries Acts.

Counties in Scotland are not empowered to adopt Libraries Acts in the same way as similar authorities in England and Wales, but have powers conferred on them under the *Education (Scotland) Act*, 1918, and the *Local Government (Scotland) Act*, 1929. Section 5 of the *Education (Scotland) Act*, 1918, is the relevant section and reads as follows :

“ it shall be lawful for the education authority of a county, as an ancillary means of promoting education, to make such provision of books by purchase or otherwise as they may think desirable, and to make the same available not only to the children and young persons attending schools or continuation classes in the county, but also to the adult population resident therein.

“ For the purposes of this section an education authority may enter into arrangements with public libraries, and all expenses incurred by an education authority shall be chargeable to the county education fund.”

To a layman this seems rather an indeterminate clause upon which to base a fully fledged county library system as we now understand it. Even the experts have apparently their misgivings. For instance, Mr. Andrew Shearer, Town Clerk of Dunfermline, said at the Scottish Library Conference, 1931, “ the powers given by the statute to education authorities may have been expressed in . . . general terms with a view . . . to confer a wide discretion on the authorities in exercising their library powers ; but it may be permissible to argue that they are limited to the provision of books, that such provision is restricted to a purpose of promoting education for scholars and adults, that the county

education authorities have not therefore the full powers and activities of library authorities under the Public Libraries Acts, and that the county councils as education authorities might advisably associate themselves with public libraries when they have opportunity to do so, which is exactly what the legislation requires them to do."

And further: "Comparing the specific library powers that have been vested in the education authorities with the more general powers and provisions of the Public Libraries Acts under which the burgh libraries exist, one sees that a large field of library work is available to the burgh libraries which properly is not touched by the education authorities."

However that may be, the clause is the one under which the county library services are in fact provided—and, in general, they are of much the same character as English county services.

The powers of the county in relation to parishes which had adopted the Libraries Acts were made clear by the *Local Government (Scotland) Act, 1929*: "The administrative scheme of the county council relating to education may provide for the administration of the said acts throughout the areas within which they are in operation being under the general supervision of the education committee", which may or may not appoint local committees. Parishes cannot now adopt the Libraries Acts without the sanction of the county council—not that it is likely to be sought or granted.

The powers of burghs were not affected. Those which had already adopted the Acts could continue their independent library existence. Any which have not adopted the Acts are presumably free to do so—though so far as we know none have done so, all the sizeable burghs having already adopted the Acts before 1918 or since been satisfied with county schemes. Nevertheless, as we read the various Acts, which are in many respects lamentably vague, there seems no reason why there should not be in any burgh two independent library services—one operated by the education committee of the county council under the Education Act and another operated by the library committee of the burgh under the Public Libraries Acts—an absurdity of which there is no example.

Yet, though inhabitants of the burghs enjoy one service only, they may have to help pay for two. This is a serious position which has aroused much concern.

It arose in this way. The education rate, from which the expenses of any books and libraries provided by the county must be met, is levied upon the *whole* of the county area, i.e. including all burghs (whether or not they are library authorities). There is no separate county library rate. The original act enabling the counties to provide books, i.e. the *Education (Scotland) Act, 1918*, contained a proviso, clearly intended to preclude the burgh library authorities from paying for a service they did not enjoy, preventing a county education authority from rating for library purposes an existing library area until the county library rate exceeded the local library rate.

This proviso was repealed by the *Local Government (Scotland) Act, 1929*, and thereafter county authorities were not only empowered to levy the rate on all burghs but had no alternative but to do so. We can only guess at the reason. If we are right in assuming that this was to induce the burghs to throw in their lot with the counties we can only say that this is an example of legislation trying to do by indirect implication what it should have had the courage to achieve by direct injunction, had it so desired. If that was the purpose it has failed, but it has created a serious injustice.

As a result the inhabitants of a burgh pay the library rate for their burgh library and they also contribute towards the cost of a county service from which they do not benefit. Appreciating the injustice of this, but being unable to make a direct return to the burgh of the actual amount its inhabitants contributed to the county library service (an amount, indeed, difficult to assess), a majority of the counties have made some amends. They give help to the burghs, finding legal



justification in their authority to "enter into arrangements with public libraries". Some counties (e.g. Perth) do not give anything to the burghs.

Elsewhere it is usual\* to give a sum of money on condition that it is expended on books. In one place this is hedged round with certain conditions—that it must be expended at certain booksellers in accordance with a quota scheme, that the books must be marked (not conspicuously) with the county library stamp, that the selection is, in theory at least, made by the burgh and county librarians in consultation, the latter having a power of veto even if it is never exercised. The variations of method depend upon the latitude regarded, by the county authorities, as consonant with a very vague law.

The amount given to the burghs is not inconsiderable. In three typical counties it is equivalent to an expenditure on books of 4·9d., 3·7d. and 2·6d. per head of the burgh population. But nowhere is it suggested that it represents the total amount collected in the burghs for county library purposes. Owing to various complications, including the fact that the county rate is levied on an assessment quite different from that on which the burgh rate is levied, it seems almost impossible to tell exactly how much the inhabitants of a burgh do in fact contribute for county purposes. One county librarian estimates that 80 per cent is returned; elsewhere it was said that 50 per cent is returned. The latter would seem more like the average. The county authority would argue that whenever a rate is levied over a large area it is never politic or possible for it to be expended equally all over the area—every element contributes its share for the common good; the burgh authority replies that, though this may be all right where such matters as secondary education are concerned, the argument has no application to the library service. The defence is also made that the county grant ensures that the burgh has at least a modest sum to spend on books. The burgh librarian retorts that this does his library no good because his authority is well aware of the county return and fixes the local book vote accordingly. The strength of this argument is proved by the fact that in certain burghs nothing, or nothing worth consideration, is spent on books from the burgh funds. Furthermore, it is complained that the county return tends to be regarded as an index of what book expenditure should be and the librarian may thus find it more difficult to raise his book vote to a reasonable figure than he would if the issue were not, in a sense, prejudged in advance. There may be an atmosphere of "you got this from the county—what more do you want?"

In brief the system is indefensible. It creates a sense—and indeed a reality—of injustice which might well militate against co-operation and good relations between authorities, though one must admit that there was a spirit of friendship and professional fellowship among the librarians themselves which it would clearly take more than "dual rating" to destroy. The ultimate solution is, of course, a proper co-ordination of libraries, all of which would be operated under a new Libraries Act and maintained by a library rate.

The only bright aspect of "dual rating" is that it has enabled a few burghs to expend more than they could legally raise in the burgh. Burgh libraries suffer from a limitation to the product of a 3d. rate. This is indeed adding insult to injury for, though none of the counties have anything like approached a 3d. rate, there is no statutory limitation of expenditure on county services (these being met from the education fund).

Neither have a majority of burgh libraries reached a 3d. rate. But some have and already the very serious results of this arbitrary and illogical restriction can be seen.

"A" has been forced this year to reduce its book vote (nearly always, alas, the only "reducible" item) by 28 per cent because of increased costs for war damage

\* Sometimes the return is given not in money but in "service", e.g. when the burgh is small the county may lend it books, just as some English counties lend books to small urban areas on payment.

insurance, fire watching, normal salary increases, etc. "B" has decreased its book vote by 10 per cent for the same reasons. At "C", with slightly decreased rateable value, the book vote *has entirely disappeared*.

Is it necessary to advance any further arguments in favour of the abolition of the limit?

The pernicious effects of the limitation are not, however, confined to the places where the 3d. rate is already expended. Everywhere it tends to restrict development because of the implication, which backward authorities are pleased to note, that a 3d. rate is a high-water mark and that it is not necessary to try to reach it; on the contrary it is a mark of "economical" trusteeship of the public purse not to do so. Where such stupidity does not operate, the limit nevertheless hampers development. As one librarian said, "I need more branches but I cannot ask for them, as the increased cost of maintaining them would bring us over the limit".

The tale is not yet complete. If in some places the whole of the product of the 3d. rate could be spent on the library service it would not be so bad. Unfortunately it would appear that where there are art galleries and museums these must also take their share of the fund. Thus, if a penny rate is required for a museum this reduces the library limit to 2d., a condition which seriously prejudices the work of some potentially excellent systems. We said, above, that this "would appear" to be the case. Scottish law is, to an Englishman, indeed "wropped in mystery". At least, the principal Act, the *Public Libraries Consolidation (Scotland) Act*, 1887, refers to "public libraries, public museums, schools for science, art galleries and schools for art"—and there is no separate Museums Act. Moreover, this support of museums from the libraries rate seems at least general.

A third limitation is that Scottish libraries are not empowered to co-operate fully with one another.

This is but a brief summary of the outstanding points. It will, however, be abundantly clear that, quite regardless of any other changes there may be in library organization and law, there is a clear and urgent need for drastic reform of Scottish library law which will provide (to quote from a statement of the Scottish Library Association) that

- "1. All rate-supported public libraries should be administered under one comprehensive public libraries act which provides for the levy of only one library rate in any area, and for the establishment of a library committee by each library authority.\*
2. Rate limitation for public libraries should be abolished.
3. Powers for complete co-operation between library authorities should be granted. . . .
10. The administration of museums, art galleries and schools of art should be the subject of separate legislation."

The S.L.A. also expressed itself in this same memorandum as in favour of other basic reforms, the advocacy of which is the burden of this report—a central advisory board, Government grants and the compulsory adoption and implementation of the Libraries Acts.

This last phrase arising from agreement with a thesis already expounded in this report—that county libraries should be under library committees and not under education committees.

## CHAPTER VI

### STOCK—SUPPLY AND CO-ORDINATION

This chapter deals with quite the most important element of the library service, which exists solely to provide books. Premises are but places in which books can be housed, chosen and used, staffs exist only to select books and make them available. One would reasonably expect to find, during any survey of libraries, that, whatever other element was deficient, the book supply would at least be given the fullest possible consideration and that when there was little money much of it would be spent on books. Had the investigator started with any such illusions they would quickly have been dispelled. There are several honourable exceptions to the general rule. This rule is unfortunately one of insufficiency, unsuitability, poverty and poor condition.

In a preliminary chapter we outlined the functions which the library service can perform; book stocks should exist for the fulfilment of all these objectives. Let us, however, take but the first—books for children. A majority of the books seen in children's departments were shabby and unattractive and a scandalously large number were positively filthy. These are not by any means all in libraries in districts where it might with reason be said that the children treated books badly. On the contrary. Conversely, there were good, clean books in urban libraries and county branches in really poor districts. Whatever the reason, there is no excuse for dirty books—especially books for children. If we are going to provide books for children at all we must be prepared to expend whatever it costs to maintain a decent usable stock, for surely the main function of a children's library is to foster a love of reading and an appreciation of books and all they stand for. Some librarians expect their young readers to seek the gems of literature in pages soiled by thousands of previous filthy hands. One speaks strongly because one feels strongly. As a general rule the condition of juvenile stock is worse than that of adult stock—and this should not be so.

Approximately 21 per cent of the libraries visited had *many* very dirty juvenile books, the majority of the rest being dingy and unsavoury; another 14 per cent had *some* very dirty books; at another 17 per cent the stock, if not positively dirty, was on the whole shabby and unattractive; at 23 per cent it was fair; at only 25 per cent could it be regarded as satisfactory.

Since we cannot believe that any librarian wishes to circulate dirty books we must assume that he does so because he cannot secure the money to provide clean ones—though, nevertheless, we would suggest that *no* books are better than dirty ones.

The fiction sections are also frequently unclean—though not to quite the same extent as juvenile books. If local pundits had paid more attention to physical uncleanliness than to alleged moral uncleanliness it might have been a good thing. In too many libraries the fiction shelves are a drab and unattractive array of shabby books, with an intermixture of filthy items, and a deadly proportion of much handled “rebinds”. By way of contrast one remembers the shelves of X, Y and Z, where could be found no novel that one would not willingly have read (so far as condition goes) over a solitary meal, where most were in their original bindings or rebound in clean attractive and varied styles, where, in fact, anything was fit to be read by anyone and where every reader would be attracted to browse. Occasionally librarians would try to defend the condition of their novels by pointing out that the offending items were “westerns” or detective stories, inviting the reply (which politeness withheld) that if a book was not worth providing in decent condition it was not worth providing at all. It may seem an exaggeration, but I am prepared to say that, were I librarian of these libraries, I would without hesitation throw away at least 40 to 50 per cent of the juvenile

and 25 to 30 per cent of the fiction on the shelves of a majority of the libraries I visited—and feel that I had been lenient.

On the whole, non-fiction was not *dirty* though where one did find dirty books they were usually of the type that one would expect librarians to provide amply and frequently—technical books.

But, if not dirty, a great many of the non-fiction books were in poor condition—shabby, in need of rebinding, faded, unattractive, useless. Nowhere in this report do we concern ourselves with the number of books in stock at various libraries because, of all misleading statistics, none can be more futile. With book stocks it is quality not quantity that matters. If even 70 per cent of the books in public libraries today were useful books we should have little reason to complain. As it is, at least 50 per cent of the non-fiction stocks are completely useless—at any rate where they are. This is definitely the most striking lesson of the survey—that most libraries are overstocked with the wrong material (which is not, of course, the same as saying that they are sufficiently stocked with the right material). This overstocking is surely a positive disadvantage. This fact must be stressed. The presence of useless and unused stock is at once expensive and a deterrent to the proper exploitation of the useful stock. If it were removed from public departments to storerooms, the disadvantage would be minimised—but too many libraries have no storage space and where this exists it is probably full of even more useless material unless, being a basement, it has been commandeered as an air raid shelter! This material, though useless where it is, is not necessarily completely useless to the nation. Though not in demand at one place it may be required at some time by readers in a wider area, and should be available. Much of it is duplicated time and time again, though perhaps half a dozen copies would meet all the likely demands of the whole country. There should be no wholesale, indiscriminate destruction, such as may follow hysterical campaigns for salvage; discarding has to be as deliberate and intelligent as acquisition. Instead we need a series of regional reserve stocks which would include at least one copy of each item (and as many duplicates as seem desirable) and from which all libraries in the region could draw specific books when required. In speaking of these regional stores we do not necessarily mean actual premises at which all the reserve stock is assembled; on the contrary, there is no reason why the reserve should not be housed in a number of the existing store places in the area. The point is that the reserve should be co-ordinated, cleared of unnecessary duplicates, properly catalogued and made available for the region and the country without, as at present, using space where it is not wanted despite the fact that those who do want it may not know where it is or be able to use it.

The disadvantages of retaining unwanted stock are many. The libraries are made unattractive. Valuable staff time (which costs money) is necessary to keep it in order and free from dust; the reader is confronted with a forbidding and too familiar array of things he does not want and finds it correspondingly difficult and distasteful to find what he does; premises which could be made roomy and light are congested and gloomy. Several libraries were seen where, if all unnecessary books and their book cases were removed, really attractive spacious departments would result. If every librarian accepted the principle that, excepting a very limited number of classical and outstandingly important items, no book deserves shelf room in an open lending department that has not been borrowed at least once during the past twelve months, we should hear fewer demands for bigger and better buildings. And let us be frank—we want good and attractive buildings, but they cost money which is always better spent on books and staff, and so we want no more and no bigger buildings than we need.

Into the regional stocks would go also the little used sets of bound periodicals, the files of *The Times* and of "Hansard", and the like which at present are unnecessarily duplicated. In a co-ordinated library system enough and no more than enough of this collecting, binding and preservation could be done.

If in one respect, however, book stocks are too large, in others they are much too small. They could not be otherwise considering the amount available for book purchase.

The annual amount expended upon books per head of population is a vital factor in determining the efficiency of a library, at any rate in relation to other libraries in its population group. It indicates the extent to which it is providing the material for its operations. No library can do more work than its book expenditure makes possible; it may for a short while exploit such older stock as it possesses but unless expenditure was previously on a higher scale this is unlikely to help much and in any case the process of deterioration must be rapid.

Examination of libraries in the various groups shows conclusively that the value of the service is in direct ratio to the *per capita* expenditure upon books. Where it is low the library service is invariably bad; where it is high the libraries are among the most active and valuable. Detailed information is given in the following chapter on Finance. Already we have noted libraries which spend as little as 1d. per head per annum or less; at least one exceeds 1s. per head. Even the last is a very modest amount indeed. It is a sum which no man or woman in the country thinks twice about spending, dozens if not hundreds of times a year, on temporary trivialities. Surely it is the most striking evidence that public libraries are economical institutions that this small contribution will give a very reasonable service. Such is the case. One shilling is by no means a maximum, but the evidence shows clearly that any large or medium-sized library which expended it would be a very satisfactory and much used institution. Provided the unit of service is large enough—a vital matter to which we must return—we would go so far as to recommend the lower sum of 9d. as a reasonable interim provision.

Even to maintain their present inadequate standards the amount spent on books would have to be much increased in most library systems were it not for the various ways, born of rate limitation and subsequent starvation, in which most libraries avoid buying new books. A large proportion of the book fund is spent on review copies, books which at least six months after publication can be purchased from the commercial circulating libraries, other second-hand books, publishers' remainders and cheap editions. There can, of course, be no objection whatever to the purchase of the last category so long as they are suitable as regards format and quality and if they are purchased as replacements or additional copies. The preponderance of the other classes of "cheap" books is open to serious question. It is freely recognized that this system has been forced upon librarians by niggardly support and we do not criticize a librarian for wise purchases in these fields; on the contrary we must praise him for trying to make his money go as far as he can. This does not alter the fact that as a system it is wrong. Every librarian should have sufficient means to purchase all the books he needs *as soon as they are needed*. He should not be compelled to adopt the principle of the nursery rhyme—"this year, next year, sometime, never".

There are several cogent reasons for this assertion.

(1) If the value of the book to the reader or readers is the justification for providing it, this value should not be diminished by any unnecessary time limitations. It is fully admitted that many books will serve most readers just as well next year as this. We agree that if a novel or a biography is worth reading today it should not normally have lost its value two or three years hence. In any case, unless there is excessive duplication, some readers will have to wait quite a time before they secure any particular book in general demand. The extent of response to popular topical demand will always remain a question of proportion to be determined by each librarian in accordance with the value of the demand. Since publishers must advertise individual books and naturally concentrate upon their latest publications and since it is these that are reviewed and discussed, there will always be a high proportion of demand which is based not on the merits but on

the newness of books. There must be new books ; there cannot be too many of them if they are worth while. The library must buy them—but the librarian can preserve a sense of proportion and a sense of values. If the general standard of provision is high—if readers can usually get what they genuinely require, they too in time will usually also acquire a reasonable attitude. The point here is that if any book is genuinely needed *now* it should be available *now* ; there must be a sufficient book vote to make this possible.

(2) When purchasing from the “cheap” market the librarian tends to buy not so much what he wants as what he can get. Some librarians very wisely would not buy at any price anything they did not think worth while. It is asking a lot of less wise men, and materially reducing the field for cheap purchases, to fix as high a standard as one would fix if one paid full price. Many of the books bought in the cheap markets, it is often asserted, are not worth buying at the full new price. Could any better argument be adduced against the practice ?

(3) The system brings to the public library a stigma of inferiority, which by lowering its prestige limits its field of activity and thus prejudices its efficiency.

(4) If the supply of ex-circulating library books (chiefly fiction, travel and biography) were found to be adequate it would imply that a very large part of the demand for these books was met by the circulating libraries. Those librarians who at present succeed in obtaining supplies overlook the fact that many more (who are generally those less able to buy other books) are not able to do so ; there would not be a big enough supply for all if all bought ; those less fortunate have to be satisfied with the less good books. Moreover, if we are to be completely honest, we must ask whether it is desirable that commercial libraries *should* supply such a high proportion of the demand for good new books in these categories. Is it, for example, quite consonant with our democratic ideals that those who can afford to pay should have books promptly and those who cannot should have to wait ? The critic has his arguments—that this is, anyhow, purely recreational reading and does the community provide free cinemas or free beer ? or that the public library should not set itself up in competition with private enterprise ? The answers are equally apt—that if it is desirable to provide recreational reading and if it is cheaper to do so by means of public rather than private supply, why not ?—and that all publicly provided services, be they health services or education or even roads have been set up in competition with private enterprise and no one today seriously questions the wisdom of so doing.

In truth, whether it is worth while for commercial enterprise to provide books should be neither here nor there. Probably commercial libraries will continue to have their functions—for example, to provide new books for the less discriminating readers who want them unreasonably quickly, for those who want books which are of lower standards than those we would adopt, and for the fast diminishing body of snobs who find pleasure in preferring a private to a public source of supply.

(5) Not the least important point, however, is that so long as public libraries are content to play second fiddle to commercial libraries they will fail to exercise that influence upon the publication of books that is at present, undesirably, exercised by their commercial counterparts. At present the prices of certain categories of books are determined by the fact that they are sold mainly to commercial libraries which are able to pay those prices and charge subscriptions because they can later unload their stocks upon a willing public library market. As a consequence not only are prices completely artificial—and therefore a barrier to legitimate private book buying—there is also an absence of standards which before the war caused a wastage of material and a production of lamentably useless books which we cannot regard as desirable. Now that the war has restricted the total output, the evil is aggravated. If public libraries were to use their powers as potential *buyers* of new books they could exert a most valuable influence not only upon the price of books, but upon the quality of book production. If the public

libraries of this country were to buy, new, all the copies of any worth-while book they could use, they could guarantee its publication at a reasonable price.

Our idea of what constitutes a "reasonable" price will itself be drastically modified if we think constructively into the future. Today we are too apt to be impressed by the value of a book as a thing rather than as a means, and too ready to accept the 7s. 6d. novel, the 15s. technical book and the 21s. biography as stable elements in a changeless order. The success of the "Penguins" surprised many who had not believed that a large circulation awaited the book that was really good of its kind so long as it was cheap enough. We can provide a large circulation for many kinds of book if we are willing to circulate them fully. The more we circulate them the cheaper we can make them. This means that when a book is of genuine worth we can think, not in terms of how few copies will suffice, but of how many we can use. We can aim at saturation point for whatever is good; we can face without alarm the discarding of unwanted duplicates that may result. We can think in terms of giving our readers all that they need that is worth giving, knowing that, though their satisfaction and benefit may be immensely greater, the cost need not be proportionately more. Such a constructive positive policy of buying and providing, as opposed to a negative restrictive policy, would of course operate over the whole range of books and would indeed be especially valuable where books in less general fields were concerned.

Present inadequate book funds do not, however, influence only the condition, newness or quantities of our stocks. They prejudice quality. Elsewhere it is shown that, with a properly co-ordinated library unit, economy can be secured by providing for each item, no matter how expensive or special, the maximum field of use. Under present conditions, each library authority must think in terms of its own, possibly very restricted, use. Thus the question of price has been a serious influence. The wise committee agrees that, assuming it to be worthy and desirable, the more a book costs the more reason why it should be procurable in a public library. Such enlightenment is rare. Usually, where committees exercise direct control of accessions their objections have been based unduly on the element of price; even where the selection has been, as it should be, delegated to the librarian, the latter has sometimes been given either explicit or implicit maximum price limits. The real solution of this, as of all other problems of book supply, can be found only in the creation of co-ordinated units which are providing for sufficient readers to justify even the most expensive purchases.

Book provision cannot be satisfactory unless the unit of supply is a large one. That sentence is the keynote of this report; it is the outstanding lesson of the investigations which have preceded it. The small unit cannot afford economically to provide all that its readers may need; the bigger unit must provide much that could be useful also to readers in an even wider area. The small unit either provides only that for which there is sufficient numerical justification in its own area, neglecting all minority demands however important, or attempts, wastefully and inadequately, to give some of the readers some of the things of limited appeal that they seek. The book stocks of most small libraries reflect this dilemma. If they include good sound material other than books of some general appeal we find that it is little used—as we should expect to find. Consequently in the small unit book provision of the better type is invariably scrappy.

The last generation of library reformers (*vide* the 1927 Report) sought salvation in regional schemes, which were to provide the reader with all his special requirements. This theory is fallacious. It assumed that there were two kinds of demand and two only—"common denominator" demands and demands sufficiently specialized to merit supply through the machinery of regional bureaux yet, curiously enough, not so urgent that they cannot wait for the clumsy creaking of its wheels. It overlooked, *inter alia*, two important points—firstly, that the bulk of sound library work lies in the use of the large intermediate mass of good

sound, but not necessarily highly specialized, material, and secondly, that *ubi mel ibi apes* and, conversely, where there is no honey there will be no bees, and the educative and formative value of libraries will be lost. If it were practicable to divide library stocks into two classes—the books that many people want and the books that few people want—the “any-kind-of-local-library plus co-operation” theory might be valid. But this is *not* practicable; and it ignores the idea that a library is not only a place from which one may obtain books but also a place in which one may learn about books and become aware of their range and values, in which one may be educated in the broadest possible sense of the word. You do not educate a man in the use of books by giving him merely whatever he already thinks he wants. Every library worthy of the name must be much more than a mass-commodity supply department; it must be representative of the wide field of books and ideas. But this is impossible in a small library relying only upon its own resources. It becomes a stagnant pool, not part of a constantly replenished stream. The simile is apt. Most small urban libraries are, apart from their popular common denominator sections, to some extent stagnant; but a good county branch, in which the stock is constantly changed, with fresh material from a well-selected reservoir, will remain always live, active and stimulating—although the *number* of books in its stock may not change. Therein lies the secret of good library stocking—refreshment and renewal. The smaller the department the more thoroughly and frequently is this needed.

These, it is suggested, are the main principles of stock provision:

(1) All the stock (with, of course, reservations regarding some reference and similar material) within a system shall be co-ordinated as one whole stock, equally available to all readers, and interchangeable between service points to whatever extent is necessary.

(2) The stock within a system shall be sufficient in quantity and in range to meet all requirements of all readers excepting those of a highly specialized character. Consequently the system itself must be reasonably large.

(3) It must be maintained in clean sound condition and kept up to date.

(4) The books which are available to the public at any department (branch, etc.) should be such as are likely to be used there, provided that

(5) the stock at every service point should include a considerable proportion of material carefully selected to display to readers the range and variety of book provision and to stimulate wider use of books. As this material will naturally be largely of such a character that at the smaller places it will appeal to relatively few readers, it must be frequently interchanged (between branches and headquarters). This can be done only if a sufficient number of service points are contained within the system.

(6) The larger the stock at a service point the more varied will it be, and the more individual requirements will it be capable of meeting. There will, however, always be a few or many demands for material outside the provision at the service point. There must be adequate machinery for supplying such material. This machinery will include (a) the right of every reader to go to a larger or more specialized department at which he may see or borrow this material; (b) means of sending it to him (perhaps at his local service point) if this is practicable and more convenient and (c), at his local service point, staff qualified to help him to get what he wants and reasonable bibliographical guidance for both staff and reader. The importance of good staffing for even the smallest service points is not sufficiently recognized. We might go so far as to say that the smaller the immediate resources of a point, the greater the need for assistants capable of exploiting what is there and of ensuring that readers make full use of the wider resources available elsewhere. In one system two small branches in precisely comparable townships were visited; one had a trained woman assistant, the other an untrained man; the former made constant use of headquarters loan facilities and had some fifty keen borrowers pursuing useful lines of individual reading—at the other



place there were hardly any special requests and the non-fiction issues were negligible.

(7) The number of books per reader available on the shelves at any time should be relatively higher in the smaller service points. Otherwise choice is unduly limited.

(8) Nevertheless the larger libraries will carry considerable stocks and the question arises whether the number of volumes displayed to the public should be limited, and if so how. The stock displayed in a few large central lending departments is obviously too large. When a stock becomes too large it naturally tends to include such a high proportion of older and less used items (however valuable they may be) that a drab unattractive atmosphere is created. Moreover, with so many books confronting them, borrowers become confused and find selection difficult and there is a much greater risk of their reading becoming canalized than if they use a smaller library.

As, however, the users of the large libraries include a high proportion with special requirements who may need access to all the useful material on their subjects of study, it would be a mistake to limit provision solely for the benefit of the general reader who may be able to use equally well a smaller branch. Local circumstances (and for some years to come the limitations of existing buildings) will determine the best solution, which may be the institution of special departments (see Ch. VII) or the frank acceptance of the central lending library of the big city as a specialists' collection with provision elsewhere for the more general reader. Experience would, however, indicate that where a central lending library is extensively used by the generality it should not house a stock of more than about 25,000 volumes.

(9) Libraries should be kept "interesting". Too many are static and uninteresting; at every visit the reader sees the same books in the same places and hopes vainly to catch some drop of the little trickle of new material which oozes through. Frequent exchange of stock and the elimination of dead material will do much. In addition attractive displays of new and topical, and of old and forgotten, books will help to liven up any department.

Have we ever thought that the average reader's clamour for "new books"—though largely stimulated by the present system of reviewing—may also be due to the fact that at the average library the only *different* book that he has not gazed upon often before is the new publication—that he would be well content and well served by a fresh lot of "old" books, provided they were in good condition and suitable? Is it not also due to his difficulty in choosing a book from excessive stocks with inadequate guidance?

## CHAPTER VII

### SPECIAL DEPARTMENTS AND SERVICES

Because of the way in which they have grown up, libraries have perpetuated a departmental system which has only recently been challenged. The first libraries were places at which books were kept and could be used—hence the “reference library”; then with the increase in periodical literature came reading rooms for newspapers and magazines; then came also the extension of facilities for borrowing for home reading—facilities once generally and still far too frequently limited by weak doubtings as to how far one can “trust” the common reader; finally, as we awakened to our responsibilities toward the young reader, we often instituted children’s departments. Such is the general four-departmental lay-out of most libraries—a lay-out often pursued in the planning of even small branch libraries. It may have practical conveniences; in large libraries it may still, with modification, be the best system. Unintelligently and inappropriately applied, however, it has had unfortunate results. It has certainly tended to segregate and separate both readers and stock. For example, there are too many people who use only reading rooms, only lending departments, only reference libraries; there is the difficult gap to bridge between juvenile and adult use. There is that too frequent sorting of books into “reference” and “lending”, with consequent waste or duplication. Elsewhere the departmental spirit has been tempted into producing a badly balanced system where, occasionally, the circulation work has been neglected in favour of the reference department, or, often, the reference work has been made to play a very inferior second fiddle to a dominant “lending” first, or has been swamped by the extension of reading room facilities.

The tradition of the larger and older city reference libraries has exercised too great an influence upon small libraries by causing either excessive emulation of or reaction from its example. Hence the small town with its unwanted, yet inadequate, imitation of the Birmingham Central Reference Library; hence, also the town that eschews all reference work because Birmingham can do it.

What is needed is both a careful relating of provision and methods to the potential requirements of each area and of each service point within the area, and an intelligent use of departmental barriers only so far as these serve valuable purposes. As an example of the latter point it would be foolish, and contrary to the interests of those who use the largest reference libraries, to allow the true reference stock of such centres to be lent outside the premises; yet by the very act of consolidating these centres we reduce the reasons why other libraries should refuse to lend many things they now retain for use only on the premises. Here, of course, is yet another instance of the impossibility of securing a good service unless it is co-ordinated on a wide basis.

Of late years there has been a marked tendency to overcome excessive departmental barriers. On the one hand we have the one-room branch, even the large library where the internal division into departments is loose and informal (e.g. at Wembley and other large Middlesex branches); on the other hand there is the American system—not yet widely adopted here—of establishing *subject* departments which are for both reference and circulation work.

We need to think of all readers as potentially requiring not only one but all or any types of library service. Consequently our methods must encourage and not hinder the “whole” use of our libraries. The various problems arising call for much more thought than we have yet given them—probably because they cannot be solved independently of the wider issues of co-ordination.

*Reference Departments.* Reference library work is the outstanding failure of British librarianship. In only a handful of libraries is it adequately practised.

Most reference departments are but an apology, a misuse of the term; in few libraries are there staff trained and experienced in the work. Too often no separate staff is even allocated to the department.

This is so because the nature of the various types of reference work has not been understood, because reference work has not been related to the needs and the practicable resources of the various types of library, because most types of reference work cannot be done economically by small units unless, at least, they are in close and active co-operation with larger units.

What is reference work? In a material sense it is, usually, the use of books and similar material on the library premises rather than in the homes of borrowers—though this in itself does not necessarily constitute reference work; there are libraries where novels or bound magazines or children's books are read on the premises. To some extent it is true that reference libraries are the places where readers consult books which they either cannot or do not wish or are not allowed to take home—books that are too expensive, rare, heavy, numerous or frequently in demand. However much such use may cover the legitimate work of a reference department it does not touch its essential definition which is that a reference library is a workshop—not merely a place where books are kept but where they are used collectively and purposively, where generally the problem to be solved is one of which it is not always or often possible to say that this or that one book will serve. Most book-use is or should be purposive, but whereas sometimes a man may say, "I want a book which will serve my purpose; I will go to the library and choose such a book and take it home with me", there are times when perhaps it is not practicable to find one or two such books, but where search through many may be necessary, or their simultaneous use may be required. And there may be times when the actual purpose is so definite and clear-cut that once the book that contains the information is found it is but a matter of minutes to note the required data so it is quite unnecessary to remove the book from the library. The frontiers of lending and of reference departments are ill defined and variable. The same items may be lending library books for one reader and quick reference material for another. Some readers may prefer to do at home what others prefer to do on the library premises. The only reliable guidance as to what should be kept in the reference and what in the lending department is (apart from extraneous factors like size and rarity) the likelihood of demand and its urgency. Usually,\* some reference library books may well be lent and many lending books used for reference purposes. Nevertheless the difference between the two departments (if not their stock) is real—one is a source of supply, the other is a place for use.

In general terms three kinds of people use a reference library—(i) those who go because there they find their material for study and research, (ii) those who use it for convenience because, for example, they would rather work there with their books than in their homes, and (iii) those who seek "information" of a specific nature.

The nature and extent of reference provision must depend, as before said, upon likelihood of demand. To some extent provision will determine demand; for example, a known and valuable special collection will attract those interested in the subject field.† Usually it will depend upon the general and local interests of the community served. As with the lending library service, small communities will produce specialized minority demands for which the small reference library is not economically justified in providing (so long as other sources are available) and, similarly, large communities will need to provide material capable of serving people even beyond the large population for which they cater directly. For a successful reference service we need precisely that same idea of grading and unity between service points that we need where lending work is concerned. As

\* i.e. except in the very large central reference libraries.

† And, of course, only a really good library attracts the fullest potential demand—but that is true of all departments.

with circulating stocks, there are certain books and certain items of information which a reader is entitled to find at his nearest library and others which it would be uneconomical to supply there *provided* the reader can either get the books and information elsewhere or, if appropriate, have them sent to him where he is. The idea of "grading", of providing at each service point the appropriate material and no more, is essential but it cannot be attained outside a fairly large co-ordinated system.

There are, however, definite limitations to the reference work that can be achieved at the smaller service points. There are certainly a number of items of sufficient general utility to justify provision in even the smallest centre and this number can be increased in the small branch and the small urban unit to the dimensions of a sizeable library of useful reference material—a library larger, *in effective items*, than is at present usually to be found. But, for effective reference work on a larger scale than that of everyday quick reference work, quite considerable collections are necessary. It is in fact true that whereas it is not worth while, economically, going beyond a certain point unless there is a fair-sized community to benefit, the more advanced and specialized reference services can only begin when that point is passed. Therefore today most reference libraries fall into two categories—those which do not provide what they should and those which try to provide what they should not. The average reference library is often largely a storehouse of little used material which is too "good" to be thrown away; very seldom indeed is it a workshop; too often books are kept there which would be far more useful if available for circulation. It is, for example, a tradition to keep "art books", and more generally, "expensive" books in the reference department—though why it should be considered more appropriate for people to use such books in a library is not clear.

In general terms, the reference department should include three categories of material: (a) quick reference books, and the other tools of an information service, (b) books of other types which it is either more appropriate or useful to make available for use on the premises—e.g. sets of periodicals, large, heavy and rare books, and also standard works in sufficient demand, and (c) special collections.

In categories (a) and (b) there should be no suggestion of "collecting" for collecting's sake. Books should be there only because they are likely to be wanted there; others should not be obtained for the reference department and if already possessed should be transferred either to reserve or to reference libraries where they are more likely to be wanted.

This principle, if obeyed, will indicate the quality and nature of material suitable for varying departments, though it must of course be tempered by a policy of anticipating and encouraging demand. Nevertheless the likelihood of sufficient demand will in a smaller place be for fewer and more general items; it will be greater for things especially important to the locality—local history and conditions, the industries and special activities of the district, etc. These should always be strongly represented.

Special collections (c) will generally, but not necessarily, be of a local character, i.e. will deal with a field which, for some local reason, makes them more appropriate there than elsewhere. This important matter is discussed in Ch. XVI. The extent of the provision will depend upon the volume of potential demand. Where the library serves the specialized requirements of a large region it may reasonably aim at being as all-embracing as may be practicable. Where, at the opposite extreme, it serves only a small community it may have only a few well-chosen general reference books and perhaps a small but highly specialized collection of material on some matter on which a number of the residents are constantly in need of information.

The existence of a reference library implies the employment of suitable staff. In small branches and centres where the reference collections can be

housed in sections or alcoves of a general department, no reference assistant is necessary\*; wherever it is large enough to justify a separate department there should be always on duty one or more experienced assistants capable of helping readers in the workshop exploitation of the department and of relating their own readers' requirements to the large resources available there or elsewhere. Reference library work calls for a wide knowledge of material, an understanding of readers and a sound education in the technique of book-use; it cannot be performed adequately by unsuitable "relief" assistants. It is, indeed, a professional specialization, and special instruction and experience should be provided as part of any educational curriculum.

Further, as already explained, reference library and information work should be co-ordinated as (or rather more intensively than) special circulating library requirements have been co-ordinated already by Regional Bureaux and N.C.L. interloans. Wherever, with the resources of stock and personnel available at any service point, it is impossible to meet a request there should be simple and speedy machinery by which it is passed on to and answered by a reference library with larger resources. Thus, with the aid of the telephone, and postal and other delivery facilities, the values of reference work can be extended to all residents in the country.

This development of a nation-wide reference service implies the existence and availability of a few large-scale central reference libraries and a system of special departments.

A special department is one which comprehends only a small part of the field of learning but covers it intensively and, as nearly as possible, completely. In the national interest there should be efficient special libraries covering every aspect of knowledge. Many—both public and private—already exist but of these a large proportion are not fully developed, are not linked up with a national library system, are not even available to the general public or to the public outside a limited area. We must adopt a deliberate national policy of linking up and strengthening existing special libraries, of reducing unnecessary duplication, and of gradually extending their range.

The three great virtues of a special department are (i) that it can do its work for the widest possible public—perhaps for the nation, perhaps for only a large region; (ii) it can do the work more thoroughly, employing and offering full scope for the services of librarians who have special subject qualifications and acquire invaluable knowledge and skill in the exploitation of their field; (iii) unnecessary duplication of effort would be avoided.

Most but not necessarily all special collections would be housed in the larger city libraries if for no other reason than that there they would be directly accessible to a larger public. Where, however, local conditions indicate heavy local demand the place primarily concerned should have preference.

The foregoing must not be taken to imply that for each subject one, and only one, special collection is necessary within the whole country. On the contrary the need for special material may be found in several regions and then first-class special collections will be necessary in each. Even so, the general principle of gradation would apply; even if there were ten special libraries on a subject, joint consideration by all concerned could well determine how far duplication might be needed and how far it could be avoided by some further subdivision of advanced elements or by the recognition of one as the central national special collection.

Akin to the provision of special departments—but not necessarily the same—is the *Subject Departmentalization* often found in America. With this system the whole wide field of library provision, as encountered at a large central library, is broken down into a number of more manageable components, each embracing

\* Though there should always be someone on duty who understands the use of reference material, etc.

a main division of knowledge (whereas the special library may often cover only a sub-division). Without Departmentalization the large central lending library becomes unwieldy, unattractive and confusing to the reader and prevents any sound assistance from a staff which cannot operate effectively over such a large field. In such conditions assistance to individual readers becomes almost impossible yet it is in just such an overgrown jungle that assistance is particularly needed. One recoils in dismay from the central lending department containing over 100,000 volumes as proposed by one eminent librarian. With departmentalization, however, instead of one library there would be several, e.g. a General Department for the non-specialist borrower, and departments each covering such fields as Philosophy and Religion; Music; Graphic, Plastic and related Fine Arts; Science and Technology; History and Genealogy; Literature, and so on.

Some duplication may become necessary, but on the whole the fields are each wide enough to serve reasonably well-defined categories of library use (*not* of "user", as the same man may of course be interested in Music and Technology—in which case he would use both departments according to his immediate needs).

If we adopt departmentalization for circulation purposes the question necessarily arises whether these departments should not also embrace reference and information work in their fields. It is difficult to deny the advantages of such combination, if for no other reasons than that the resources available for both circulation and reference will be enhanced and that the specialist staff who must be employed will have a wider field of operation. The objection that the traffic of circulation users would interfere with the quiet necessary for students is one which, at any rate in new buildings, could be overcome by providing a quiet room for the latter adjacent to the general stock room (perhaps with a staff desk strategically placed between).

*Local Collections.* The great majority of urban libraries have excellent local collections dealing with their local history and topography, and including photographs, prints, maps and manuscripts, in addition to books and printed materials.

There is, perhaps, too much duplication of effort in this field. Moreover there is sometimes too great a tendency to limit the provision of local material to the reference department. Clearly in this field each local library must act as the conservator of material and has a duty to keep it for posterity even if present use must thereby be restricted. This paragraph is, however, a plea for the maximum duplication of suitable books in the lending department. Librarians of reception areas have been impressed by the demand from evacuees for books on their new places of abode. This is a happy symptom. Today there are so many factors tending towards standardization that it is good to remember that England or Scotland or Wales are but names which represent all the small places within them, each with its individual charms and traditions.

*Lending Departments.* Of these we treat, in their different aspects, throughout the report. Here there are only a few general observations we would make. They should not contain too much stock, nor stock which is not likely to be used. Usually they are comfortless; a few chairs and tables should always be provided. One library has an alcove, containing no books, into which the reader can withdraw for a quiet examination of a book prior to deciding whether or not to take it. Often they are much too crowded. The old-fashioned floor bookcases in serried rows or arranged according to some fanciful idea of radiation create an unfriendly atmosphere and often, more materially, result in narrow gangways, congestion and bad natural lighting. The idea that we need "good supervision" is outworn, and in any case we get still better supervision in an "open" room. Undoubtedly the ideal plan for a modern library is one with a clear centre floor space and bookcases round the walls—either, in a small place, simple wall cases, or if more shelf room is needed, shallow alcoves. If anything is wanted in the

centre except the chairs and tables we can provide attractive show cases or low bookcases.

*Newsrooms.* We are most emphatically of the opinion that newspaper rooms are not a desirable provision.\* They are, in proportion to their very limited values, expensive to maintain; they attract an undesirable element and so prejudice the good repute and full use of the library as a whole; they are used by only a very small section of the public. All but one or two of the librarians I met subscribed to this opinion. This is borne out by the fact that in most new buildings newsrooms have not been provided; in other towns they have been closed, while (with few exceptions) county libraries have not provided newsrooms at their branch premises. Newsrooms, even in libraries otherwise excellent, are seldom well kept—perhaps still further evidence of the low regard in which they are held. Generally they are dreary and dirty, as often are their habitués. Newsrooms are a survival from the days when a higher proportion of people were not accustomed to reading books, when newspapers were—in relation to wages—more expensive, when—before the days of Employment Exchanges—newspapers were used extensively by those seeking employment. None of this has much weight today.

Newsrooms are more expensive than they appear at first sight. To the cost of the papers, which is relatively little save in the very small library, must be added the proportion of loan charges and costs of maintenance—heating, lighting, cleaning, etc. In addition—and often much more expensive—the presence of a newsroom frequently demands the employment of male janitors who would not otherwise be necessary, and in several places newsrooms (and consequently library buildings) are kept open for longer hours than are deemed necessary for other departments.

The position is aggravated still more when, as is frequently the case, the newsrooms occupy the best lighted ground floor rooms, forcing other more important departments into less satisfactory quarters—and where the overcrowded lending department is denied the relief that the abolition of the newsrooms would permit.

The *Reading Room*, in which better class periodicals may be read, is not quite the same proposition—though it again should be viewed critically. Are the periodicals sufficiently useful and are they used by sufficient people to justify the costs involved or the limitations of space (if any) imposed upon other departments? Such critical re-examination might lead to an improvement in the quantity and quality of periodicals which too often seem scanty and “popular”. Surely there is little excuse for expending large sums upon magazines which serve no better purpose than popular novels; alternatively it would be cheaper to circulate them.

Nevertheless it would be a great mistake to neglect providing accommodation for the more valuable periodicals, which cover a wide variety of subjects, keep book information up to date and help to promote an intelligent interest in current affairs. Whether separate periodicals rooms are necessary must depend upon the size of the library. In small places the system of placing periodicals in the same room as the lending department (the one-room library) has proved very successful; it has the advantage that readers are under supervision, which prevents use of the room by loafers and undesirables.† The objection has been raised that the

\* The only exception we would make is that in the large city a well-managed department displaying a wide selection of foreign and provincial papers may be of considerable value—especially to those concerned with commerce and the like. This is, however, quite a different proposition from the usual “newsroom”.

† Incidentally it is difficult to keep undesirables out of public rooms unless they commit some breach of byelaws. There seems no reason why better control could not be achieved by limiting the use of reading rooms to ticket holders (or at least having power to do so), it being understood that all *bona fide* residents could hold tickets and that the tickets of other authorities would be accepted.

comings and goings of lending library users are not conducive to quiet reading. We doubt if there is much in this point provided the room is not so congested that readers cannot be kept reasonably apart; in any case there is much coming and going in the average reading room. Reference libraries are used as periodicals rooms to a greater or lesser extent in most places. This is not necessarily to be condemned; it is a question of degree. It may well be appropriate to keep technical, scientific and specialized periodicals even in the largest reference libraries. Elsewhere—e.g. in smaller towns where the volume of true reference work is small—the combination has advantages provided the amount and method of use of the periodicals does not interfere with true reference work either by causing disturbance or occupying too much of the accommodation. Furthermore, even in small libraries it is most desirable to provide small study rooms in which the more serious students can work in peace and, if need be, leave their material undisturbed during temporary absence (from evening to evening, or for meal-times, etc.).

*Work with Special Classes of Readers, etc.* A number of libraries help to provide, more or less thoroughly, books for various classes of readers who are temporarily or permanently unable to use ordinary library premises and facilities—e.g. those (including the staff) in hospitals, convalescent homes, sanatoria, maternity homes, public assistance institutions, homes for mental defectives, asylums, prisons and the like. Occasionally they receive grants for this work from such local bodies as the Public Assistance or Public Health committees. Others assist in supplying books for merchant seamen. A few lend books to the blind, but usually this good work is left to the National Library for the Blind, to which a number of libraries give assistance, many paying postal costs for readers in their area.

Such activities cannot be described or discussed in detail in this report. There can be no doubt, however, that much more can and should be done in all these fields and that it is a function of the public library service to do it. More than one librarian has expressed the view that all books which are provided out of public local funds for local purposes (excepting of course such books as school texts and departmental reference books) should be administered by the public library. In this way economy and efficiency should result. We are in agreement with this view, for it is clear that such services will not be adequately developed until they are the responsibility of one body, acting, of course, in close co-operation with the other parties concerned. They are not likely to flourish either while we are undecided as to responsibility or while they are contingent upon small grants from other bodies—though we agree that in present circumstances these grants are welcome evidence that these other bodies appreciate the needs and will surely help in any programme of development.

*Lecture Rooms, Exhibitions and other Extension Activities.* Of the urban libraries visited a few had lecture rooms; it is difficult to give an exact total as wartime uses of parts of library premises may have "concealed" two or three, but it was not 10 per cent. Elsewhere there were rooms which could be, and on occasion were, used for lectures—e.g. children's rooms, in one case the reference library, museum and art gallery rooms. In three or four places the library committee arranged lectures held in halls which are not part of the library premises. The war has, of course, reduced lecture work; it would not seem ever to have been so extensive as librarians' publicity has led us to imagine. But, though some librarians expressed the view that the days of the popular lecture were past, most agreed that it was valuable to have a smaller suitable room in which local educational and similar groups and committees could hold their meetings, this serving to bring them into contact with the library.

If there were few lectures—with the exception of the admirable series organized by two or three large systems—librarians seemed to be doing their best to help the Ministry of Information and similar departments by having



exhibitions and occasionally holding film displays. Most of the Ministry of Information exhibitions seen were not impressive, consisting as they did of enlarged pictorial matter which could have been presented much more effectively, widely and pleasantly in pamphlet or book form.

To return, however, to general principles: the point was raised from time to time as to whether the library should attempt to become a centre of culture, education or what you will—a focal point, as it were, for the various intellectual interests of the community—perhaps even be associated, as in a community centre, with recreational and social activities. The question is one with many implications, the answer to which must depend upon local circumstances and matters of degree. In the villages, for example, the library could often find convenient quarters in a community centre which might be made possible by a union of forces. This field should be explored. When, however, we consider the library in urban areas we are on different ground. From all the evidence available it would definitely appear a bad thing to be associated with matters recreational—games, socials, dances and the like. One has only to consider the miners' institutes with their palatial up-to-date billiards saloons and their filthy library rooms, or remember the pandemonium at an American experiment of this kind. Furthermore we must not take it for granted that community centres necessarily serve all or even a substantial part of the community; they may well come to serve only sections, classes or cliques. It is a bad thing to limit the appeal of the library by associating it, however intangibly, with sectional organizations. Though it is not our immediate business we may note also that the provision of community centres on housing estates is challenged by some critics as tending to crystallize existing class feelings rather than promote wider understanding. A further point to remember is that though in the existing régime the librarian may, not unjustifiably, exploit "extension activities" in order to secure publicity for a service that is inadequately supported and recognized, this value will disappear when the library service is placed on a proper footing. Furthermore the library must avoid any tendency to neglect its chief work, which is service to the individual, through any excessive bias towards organized groups which at best can only represent a small part of the total library-using interests of the community. On balance, therefore, we feel that the library should stick to its own job; if it has any facilities it can extend to others it should extend them; it must be active in its assistance to all types of communal activity but it can do this without merging its identity in any other sphere. The library will become the true intellectual centre of its area when it is in a position to give full library service to all those in the town who are giving community service of any kind—for these will surely need and use the library.

This does not of course affect the practical question as to the *situation* of library premises near to, or even in the same premises as, other community institutions. On the contrary, unless these, as is unlikely, interfere with the amenities of the library, this is often desirable and a convenience to the public. There are several good examples, where libraries have been built near to schools, clinics, baths, etc. There are also cases where the different departments of the local authority have erected joint premises serving two or three of these purposes with the result that all secure a cheaper and better building, which will also cost less to maintain.

*Museums and Art Galleries.* Several libraries are associated with art galleries, or museums or both. Often they share premises. Sometimes the librarian acts as curator; elsewhere there are separate curators who may be independent of or subordinate to the librarian. Sometimes the libraries and museums are governed by "Libraries, Museums and Art Galleries" committees, with Museum or Libraries Sub-committees; occasionally there are separate committees.

This association arises from the fact that museums, when provided by local authorities, are (speaking in general terms) provided under the Libraries Acts.

Whatever theoretical affinities may be argued, experience shows that the two do not go well together. Joint management of library and museum usually means that one—often the museum, occasionally the library—is neglected at the expense of the other. This is especially the case where the same chief officer is responsible for both. The qualities and qualifications appropriate to one type of work are not those most suitable for the other. Where the two are under the same committee one is liable to overshadow the other and secure more than its fair share of interest and support; often total resources too small for either have to be shared, and demands for one militate against provision for the other. Where the two institutions are under different officers, conflict of interests may arise—especially when, as in Scotland, there is a legal limit to joint total expenditure.

Even the physical association of libraries and museums can be most unsatisfactory. There is nothing more detestable than a library cluttered up with an ill-assorted overflow of museum specimens. Moreover, if we could assume that museums at present enjoy suitable premises with an appropriate atmosphere (which of course we cannot assume) they are certainly not those we would ask for our libraries.

I am not concerned in this report with museums, neither am I competent to discuss them. Yet I am convinced that their best interests will be served only when they are dissociated completely—legally and administratively—from the public library service. Only then can those responsible for museums secure either adequate support or suitable trained personnel. If museums are properly developed they are sufficiently important, and have sufficiently distinctive functions, either to stand on their own or to devise a national organization similar to that which we later propose for libraries. Whether or not those responsible for museums feel that their activities are or can be so closely linked with those of the educationist as to justify their incorporation in the national and local educational system, it is for them to say. Of this I am certain—that in the interests of both libraries and museums they should not become an integral part of the new library organization.

This does not mean that much more effective and intimate co-operation cannot exist between local libraries and museums. Libraries must be ready to co-operate with *any* activity that is working for the benefit of the community.

There are, perhaps, exceptions to every rule. While on my wanderings I saw only one museum that did not seem out of place in the library. It was at a county branch and consisted entirely of material illustrating the history and social conditions of the town in which it was situated. Here specimens illustrating the life and work of past times can be seen side by side with prints, maps, manuscripts, broadsides and other printed documents, all of these last being appropriate material for the local collection of a library. There were no natural history specimens—no stuffed birds, bottled snakes, beetles or fossils. One was tempted to feel that this museum was a genuine development of a “local collection”. But—if we step so far from our proper province, how much further may we not wander? Is this not a case that could be met by the loan to the museum of appropriate library material? Probably. So we remain of our previous conviction.

## CHAPTER VIII

### WORK WITH CHILDREN

Increasing attention has been paid throughout the present century to library work with children. Where it has been sound and well founded the nation is already reaping the benefit in the form of many thousands of adults who are conscious of the values of books, experienced in their use and enjoying the balance, personal resource and better understanding that must result. Where it has been misguided superficial lip service it has, perhaps, aggravated tendencies at which no wise person would consciously and deliberately aim. Where it has been inadequate the opportunities have been missed, even if the dangers have been avoided.

Work with children is a responsibility. This is true of all library work, but whereas with adults we may, in a democratic age, pass to the reader most of the blame for any failure there may have been, we must accept it ourselves where children are concerned. This is not a plea for taking children's work too seriously. The child, like the adult, needs roughage if he is to digest his food. But if we only give him roughage we must not expect to build bonny babies. A general view of our work with children suggests that, though on the whole it has been beneficial, there has not always been the fullest desirable heed shown for the vitamin and protein content of the food provided—and in some areas there must have been much hunger.

Children are naturally voracious readers, partly because they are intensely curious and receptive, partly because they have time to spend and need recreation. Whether what they read will increase their curiosity, their eagerness for knowledge, their appreciation of ideas and their constructive abilities, or whether it will emphasize that inherent mental laziness which finds contentment in time-passing relaxation, will depend upon the reading habits they acquire, upon the material that is made available and the manner in which it is presented to them. If library provision for children achieves the first end it is worthy of our utmost efforts; if it is only to result in the second, it is not worth bothering about, for though that type of reading has considerable and appreciable values in the scheme of life, it does not need education or encouragement.

In other words, if work with children is to be done at all—and who would deny that it should?—it must be done very well. Is it being done very well? If one must be completely honest, one must say that, with the usual honourable exceptions, it is *not*. Reference has already been made to the frequently very bad condition of juvenile stock. Even more generally it is not wisely selected. The proportion of poor grade material, of remainders, of "rewards" rather than fables, of machine-made hack-written rubbish is far, far too high. For this the librarian is not entirely to blame because there is a definite lack of good material. Publishers and authors are here primarily to blame. But librarians and library authorities are secondarily to blame because if they seriously and generally had made known the deficiencies of present-day juvenile book production, and if they had extended their financial and moral support, already there would have been considerable improvement in supply. One of the first tasks facing the post-war librarian is therefore to encourage the adequate production of suitable material necessary for a full development of library work with children. We must make it known that we are the most important buyers of children's books and that we want all the best material that writers of ability, understanding and imagination can produce.

There must be no more buying from the jobbers' bags but instead a general

acceptance of the procedure, already adopted by some progressive county and urban libraries, of limiting provision to carefully selected items chosen by well-qualified people.

Thus we come to the second element—the supply of children's librarians. Upon them rests the responsibility for discovering what is the best provision for the young reader, for helping to provide it, for encouraging its use according to individual needs and characteristics. It is not work for anyone, it calls for a knowledge of the child and his mind, sympathy with his needs, and personal qualities which will secure his confidence and friendship. These qualities are largely inherent; they can be enhanced by experience and training. To what extent have we taken steps to find, train and employ these people? How many properly chosen and well-trained children's librarians are there?

Methods of catering for children are diverse, overlapping and confused. There are two systems of providing books for children—provision through schools and provision at public library service points. Sometimes one, sometimes the other is preferred. Frequently both are operating in the same area. There are two possible authorities—the library committee and the education committee. Sometimes both are supplying books; sometimes there is collaboration, sometimes not. Furthermore the standards of service accepted by the providing authorities vary enormously. Yet surely this is one field of library work in which it would seem pre-eminently desirable to follow uniform procedure and adopt accepted standards—and easy to do so.

As conditions in urban and county libraries are here rather dissimilar, let us consider these services separately. Juvenile services in the counties must be to some extent determined by general factors; the urban libraries have, however, been in theory free agents—free to adopt either supply through libraries or supply through schools, or both. What *have* they done?

(1) *Supply in urban library premises.* Every urban public library visited provides some children's books. In other words, no public library would seem to be content to rely entirely upon school services, which is interesting. In a few cases there is no juvenile provision at central libraries situated in busy commercial and non-residential districts but all the branch libraries are, in these places, so provided.

There is no need to describe here the excellent work done in the several libraries where attractive departments, well stocked and served by trained children's librarians, are in operation. This information is readily available. The matter we would here consider is how far the generality of librarians have tried to live up to these ideals. The results are disappointing. Let it be repeated that much more often than not the stock is in very bad condition. Again, though the desirability of a separate room set aside for children has been repeatedly urged, it is surprising to find that in more than 40 per cent of the main libraries visited (i.e. excluding branches) there was no separate department, children being served in the ordinary lending library. Here provision ranges from a few shelves to a fair sized "corner", but where this is sufficiently ample and well separated from the adult part of the library and where it contains tables for junior readers it has been classed as a "children's library" and not included in the 40 per cent. Most of the libraries without children's rooms are small, but not all of them are—a quarter of them are in towns of over 50,000 population.

Though it is difficult to secure precise information regarding staff (as ideas vary as to what constitutes a genuine "children's librarian") it may be said that at none of the 40 per cent is there likely to be an assistant charged with the special duty of helping the children, whereas at a majority of the others there is no special allocation, the children's department being served merely by such assistants as happen to be available. It would seem, nevertheless, that good work can only be performed where there is a separate room, with ample space for readers, staffed by assistants suited to the work and given sufficient time to do it thoroughly

and, when necessary, individually. Where these conditions pertain, the results are patently worth while.

Most children's libraries provide a few reference books; in two or three places there are little reference departments or study rooms opening out of the children's department. At one big city the children's libraries are reading rooms only. They are excellent large departments containing sound general juvenile stocks, fiction as well as non-fiction, which are for use *only* on the premises. Children who want to borrow must do so from other stocks (which are inferior in condition) in the adult lending department. One would question the wisdom of this system.

In smaller branches separate departments may frequently be impracticable and uneconomical; on the other hand, as branches are usually situated where the children live, there is a strong argument in favour of good children's libraries at branches wherever possible. Children's work, calling less for special than for general material, is eminently capable of decentralization.

(2) *Supply in urban elementary schools.* About 20 per cent of the urban systems, mostly in the larger towns, make provision in the schools as well as in the libraries. There would appear to be two main reasons for school collections. The first, which no longer has any force, was that in the days of rate limitation a library could increase its spending power to the extent that its education committee paid for the books and possibly the service. The second, which still has considerable validity, is that where there are insufficient branches unless children can get books at their schools they would need to make excessive journeys, perhaps through busy streets, to use the nearest public library service point. This factor must carry some weight though ultimately, should it be proved better to substitute service at library premises, we must face the need for more service points—possibly some which are for children only.

The sums allocated by education committees vary. They do not necessarily represent the total spent on school libraries because sometimes the amount is supplemented from public library funds. Of the representative cases examined, the highest expenditures per head of elementary school average attendance are 8.6d., 8.4d., 8d. and 7.5d.; the lowest are 0.7d., 1d., 1.1d., and 1.7d. Even the best of these cannot represent a very high standard of provision. Experience indicates that for normal library purposes a minimum book fund of 9d. per head of total population is desirable, though perhaps only 30 per cent or less of the population are active readers. But we expect *most* of our school children to be readers—which reduces the effective expenditure per child reader to less than 3d. in the best instance. Of course some of these children also have access to public libraries. The lowest rates of expenditure are frankly contemptible and unfortunately (with one exception) the normal library service at these places is also bad.

So long as the education committee seeks Government grant, or its equivalent, on children's books these must be put in the schools. How far has this influenced the decision? The point would disappear if public libraries received grants. How far, also, has the receipt of moneys from the education committee militated against equivalent or even larger sums being allocated in the library rate? It is difficult to say. The ultimate wisdom, however, of financing a service from two different funds may be questioned as likely, to say the least, to introduce extraneous arguments.

Though in the worst of the systems the quality and number of the books were such as to make the whole provision worthless and prejudicial, in other places a genuine attempt was made to give the most effective service possible. At "A", for example, provision is on a basis of  $1\frac{1}{2}$  books per scholar over 8 years of age in schools with 500 children or more, and 2 books per scholar in smaller schools. The collections are static, i.e. not changed or brought in for overhaul, it being argued that if the collections are large enough there is no need to change

the books as the children themselves change. An extensive basic list of suitable books had been compiled and to this supplements are added regularly. Teachers can choose any books on this list. To help them there is a demonstration collection including a copy of every book listed, each containing a descriptive annotation. Selection is made by a committee of teachers working in conjunction with the librarian. The latter also edits a bulletin published by the education committee for distribution to children and consisting of extracts from and articles about books. The organization and enthusiasm here is certainly deserving of twice the present book expenditure though it is one of the highest.

At "B" the books come back to the library for overhaul every term. The teachers who act as school librarians visit the library and make their own selections. Head teachers are asked to send in a brief report on and criticism of the provision, while the librarian tries to visit them informally once each term to discuss also other forms of co-operation between the school and the children's library and the public library in general. If the librarian (or better, his senior children's librarian or librarians) can maintain such relationships and secure the genuine interest of the teachers, many of the difficulties and defects so often experienced would disappear. School libraries could be strengthened in districts lacking easy access to public libraries, and convenient schools could build up an intensive programme of mutual assistance, with lessons at the library and library lessons in school to encourage library use. Unfortunately these conditions appear to be by way of ideals. Librarians too often complain of the apathy of teachers who are not even sufficiently interested to help in regular exchanges. In such cases there can be little encouragement given to the children to use the books that *are* provided. One can appreciate the excellent work that a keen teacher can do; once again we would reiterate that we cannot afford in any branch of librarianship to rely upon enthusiasm which the responsible authority has no reason to presuppose is invariable, and has no means of encouraging or requiring.

There are several instances, also, of education authorities providing some sort of library service completely independent of official contacts with the public library. This may even happen where the library authority is also the authority for elementary education, and is due to lack of co-operation within the authority's service. It also happens where the library authority is not the elementary education authority (e.g. where the county is the *library* authority for areas which are themselves Part 3 *education* authorities), and where the county education authority is not the library authority (as in the London Metropolitan Boroughs, the Scottish burghs, and many smaller independent authorities). The supply of books for school purposes is quite another matter. Speaking of the provision of general and recreational books, however, it must be regarded as deplorable that two separate and uncoordinated authorities should be attempting the same task. We have no doubt that it is the function of the library authority to provide general books for children, quite apart from the question of whether it is better to serve children from public libraries or from schools.

(3) *The provision of books for children by county library authorities.* Almost equally wide variations are evident. To make clear a complicated situation let us divide the discussion into three parts (a) which department (education or library) *provides* the service, (b) how far do the education committees make grants to county libraries, and (c) how and from what premises is the service given.

(a) What department of the County Council *provides* the service? To many this question will seem absurd; surely, they will say, in all counties the education committee is also (or comprises) the library committee, therefore it is the education committee that provides the service. Maybe so—but that does not prevent some county education committees from providing school library services separate and distinct from the county library and not necessarily co-ordinated with it. There is at least one case where *both* the county education committee and the county library are running separate and unrelated services even to the extent of both

providing the same schools with the same sort of books but by entirely different machinery—which is manifestly ridiculous.

Different methods of operation where the service is provided by the *education committee* and *not* by the county library are illustrated in two counties visited. At “A” every school is given some books by the education committee. The county library does not supply general juvenile books to schools, but it does *supplement* the school collections by sending any books from the county library stock that are requested by teachers. And it *does* provide juvenile books at its branches. This means that children who do not live in branch areas or go to rate-supported schools are not provided for at all—we admit they may not be numerous. At “B” there are school libraries in all elementary and secondary schools in the county library area (i.e. excluding Part 3 authorities which are independent library authorities). These are not part of the county library scheme but the work is supervised by the county librarian. Books are selected by a committee of teachers working in association with the county librarian. The collections are static. The head teachers see to the discard of worn-out items but no rebinding is done. New books and replacements are added on the basis of an annual expenditure of 1s. per head of school attendance at senior schools and 6d. per head at junior. Undoubtedly provision is here far more generous than in any but a few counties, whatever their system. There are 320,000 books in elementary schools and 80,000 in secondary schools. Nevertheless the county library provides children’s books in most of its branches and it also sends batches of juvenile books to supplement the education committee’s stocks in some small schools where there are also general county library centres.

(b) How far do the education committees make grants to county libraries for the supply of children’s books? As before noted these payments are eligible for Government grant so long as the books are circulated through schools *and* to children attending schools. It is therefore surprising that in several counties no such grant is made. Where a grant is made it varies considerably in amount per head; in one case it is 8½d., in another as low as ¼th of a penny. Of course, as in the case of urban libraries, it seldom if ever represents the total amount spent on children’s books for schools and bears little relation to the general support given—the instance of low grant given above is in fact a county that supports its county library service very generously compared with the counties as a whole. The point that emerges is really that the amount paid by the education committee in this way sometimes depends upon the extent to which the authority seeks to earn Government grant, whereas sometimes it is but an expression of interest or is made to encourage some special provision.

(c) How and from what premises is the service given? Where the adult county centre is in a school, clearly children also must be served there; moreover, where the adult centre is not in a school it may be undesirable or impracticable for it to serve children, in which case there is no alternative to the school. Opinion is divided as to whether, if choice existed, the children *should* be served from the school. Most county librarians would prefer, as do most of their urban colleagues, that children should use ordinary adult and general service points. Others, including some whose work is of such a quality that their opinions are entitled to every respect, prefer service from schools. One librarian of a county where there are school libraries in nearly all schools believes that the school is the best centre and that adult work should be conducted (in places too small for branches) in library rooms in the biggest school in the area. In another county the librarian goes further. Provision of children’s books in the branches is confined to books for younger children to be borrowed by parents, etc.; all children’s work is done through the schools, each of which has its own collection, changed regularly as though it were a centre. But he takes special pains to ensure that all children are made aware of general library provision, and children before they leave school, even in the remote villages, are taken to the nearest branch for a library lesson

and are then given forms for membership and told what to do to continue their reading. Here also a very close contact with the schools is maintained by the district and regional branch librarians. This county also observes a high standard, and no books that are not worthy are provided anywhere. Excellent descriptive lists of acceptable juvenile books are published annually and must do much to promote a really useful service.

In most counties, however, juvenile books are provided at branches and usually juvenile books are not provided for schools in the areas served by branches.

Just as we discovered in urban libraries, those authorities which do least for their adults do least for their children, but, as in the counties the library committee is the *education* committee, the fact may seem to have greater significance! One county which has no special grant and very limited general funds does not provide any juvenile books at all in numerous places, many of them large; in another the supply is so bad that even poor miners' institutes acting as centres are impelled to buy children's books from their own funds.

To summarize: The *advantages* of providing school libraries were claimed to be: (a) that they thus reached children who *would* not go to a public library—a feeble argument, surely; (b) that they reached children who could not go there—or at least that it was always easier for the child to get his books at the school; (c) that at the school the teacher, who knew the child and his tastes and abilities could help him in his choice; (d) that Government grants could be secured—though this argument would disappear if there were Government grants for libraries in general.

The *disadvantages* would seem to be (a) that the selection available at the school was necessarily much more restricted than it would be at the library, with its larger stock; (b) that as school libraries are normally only available during very limited periods the user of the public library had much greater opportunities for choosing his books and longer hours in which to enjoy their company; (c) that at the library he could enjoy the help of trained children's librarians; (d) that the school library was inevitably regarded as an extension of "schooling"; whereas access to the public library showed that books were the doors opening on to new, if complementary, horizons; (e) that the teacher, when he was keen, could help the child very effectively, but when he was not keen the child might lose incentives and opportunities for more general, imaginative reading; (f) that there was in the school inevitably an idea, however unfounded, of compulsion, whereas in the library there was an atmosphere of freedom; (g) that if children go to a library they acquire a habit, and a desire, that will continue after they leave school, whereas, despite library visits and lessons, the school library does not so readily promote continued library use after school years.

Considering these various factors and with full appreciation of the stimulus the teacher can give—and which, indeed, can be just as effective if it takes the form of an injunction to go to the public library and get a particular book—there can be no doubt whatever that, unless geographical considerations prevent, children should be served in their public libraries and not in the schools.

The foregoing does not of course mean that our schools should be without books or that they should not co-operate with the public libraries much more than is general now. We have been thinking principally of the general reading of the children, not of that kind of book use which is more directly associated with the school curriculum. This latter is primarily the province of the teacher but it is certainly not a matter in which librarians can be uninterested.

Let us, therefore, consider further the conclusion that, unless geographical considerations prevent, children should be served with their general reading in their public libraries and not in the schools. This assumes the readiness and ability of the library authority to establish children's departments at the libraries, large or small, which serve the general readers of town and country. We shall be foolish to imagine that this can be attained without a considerable extension of



present library facilities which it will take some time to achieve. Meanwhile until branches and the like have been established we must continue to serve the children through the schools—and we must do it much better than at present. There will always be some places where the school remains the only suitable agency—for example in thinly populated rural districts. We might well accept the general principle that (apart from school books) all books for loan to children should come within the province of the public libraries, therefore where children have to be served in the schools, whether temporarily or permanently, the service should be provided by and at the expense of the public library. The public library will see that the stocks provided are ample, in good condition and changed frequently—for even if large static stocks may appear to provide sufficient choice if we assess this on an arithmetical basis, they show the child only a small part of the world of books and there is, anyhow, nothing more likely to kill interest and enthusiasm than always to see the same old familiar items. We should, however, try to go much further than this. If the child cannot visit the library, the librarians *can* visit the child at school. So we should seek to arrange, with the education authorities, for members of the staff (e.g. from the regional branch) to attend the school for a short period each week to act as school centre librarians, perhaps to give lessons on books or story hours, and always to establish contact and make friends with the teachers. Further, it would be this assistant's duty to arrange that all children, when they are due to leave school, shall visit those places from which in future they will get their books—both centres and branches. Already at least one county system does this most thoroughly and effectively. Even where the children are themselves served by public library service points there should be an assistant charged with maintaining sound relationships between school and library. This assistant will be able to help the schools in their other needs for books. These are two kinds: (a) the school library proper and (b) special books needed in connection with school work.

To consider (a) first. Every school should have a school library though usually it should not be a general collection including recreational books (the child will normally go to his public library for these). There should always be some suitable reference books—not only such things as dictionaries, etc., but also standard comprehensive works on matters covered in the school's work, and on handicrafts and games, collections of stories for telling, one-act plays and all such similar material as will help the teacher to enrich his teaching and the pupil to settle on the spot the immediate problems and matters of fact that arise in his school life. How many schools have such a library? One or two that were visited did not appear to have *any* books except school books. This provision is of course a matter for the education authorities to make; all we can do is to urge the value of such material and to offer our help in its selection and maintenance.

Boarding schools are in a different category and there is a strong case for a good general library because the pupils will necessarily have less opportunity of using public library premises—though even here the public library service should not be neglected. One distinguished school librarian expressed the opinion that school libraries in secondary and public schools have a dangerous tendency to create class consciousness. There is probably much in this argument. Quite apart from this, however, it stands to reason that the child who is taught to rely entirely upon his school library is at a disadvantage when he leaves school.

(b) No school library, however provided, can include all the material that *could* be used to advantage in school work were it available. For example, geography and history lessons could be made much more direct if illustrated books or selections from an "illustrations" collection were available. Again there must be occasions when the teacher would prefer to encourage individual study had he access to the needed books, while individual reading periods could be diversified by fresh material from the library. We cannot envisage the full extent

of the demands a teacher *could* make upon a library that was prepared to help ; it must be considerable and it would serve both the teacher and the librarian who is eager that children should be aware of the full uses of books of all kinds. This kind of co-operation has been exploited much more in America than over here.

Co-operation will lead to an even more fundamental relationship and remove a present fault in our educational system—that it does not sufficiently teach the child to use books. Librarianship consists in a recognition of the all-pervading influence of books, in the provision so far as practicable of everything that may be useful and valuable to each individual and in encouraging him to use it. That last and most difficult part of our task would be rendered much easier if at the schools the place of books in life were given due emphasis. We can do much ourselves if our children's departments are good and well staffed ; the teachers also can do much. It is surely a joint responsibility. We both recognize that many of the abilities and opportunities of adult life cannot be exploited fully by those who ignore or are ignorant of the uses of books. It is the teacher's duty to provide the child with his initial equipment for facing the post-school world. Much of his work will be wasted unless the child knows where he may go for books, what he is likely to find in them, and how he can gain from them whatever it is he needs. Therefore we suggest that all children should have some lessons on books as a permanent essential element in the curriculum. In the higher standards—and certainly in secondary schools—these may take the form of a general account of the world of books and its range, of lessons on the different kinds of books—literature, travel, history, technical books, nature study and so on—and of training and practice in the use of a few basic reference works—dictionaries, atlases, "Whitaker", timetables, etc. Thus, throughout, the all-pervading significance of books will be exemplified by the presence in class rooms and library rooms of plenty of books on all manner of things. Let our children be truly brought up in an atmosphere of books. This is not to advocate the promotion of "bookishness" ; on the contrary, we librarians have no use for books as books but only as instruments for living wider lives. The books in the school would be used to enrich the school life in all its phases, scholastic, recreational and individual.

Of late years much consideration has been given to the appointment and training of school librarians. Often the appointment of teachers trained to act also as school librarians is advocated. We do not disagree with this in general but we would make two provisos—first, though it is desirable that one teacher should be in charge of the library and should be, as it were, the school's specialist in that field and the one to whom the giving of lessons in book-use would fall (where this is not done by visiting public library assistants), we must not exaggerate the need for *technical* library training. Given close co-operation with the public library staff the management of a school library should be relatively simple ; a short course should be ample to teach the school librarian all he needs to know about routine processes and general principles. It is much more important to train him in the use and exploitation of books. Secondly, this training should not be confined to the school librarian but given (perhaps not so intensively) to *all* teachers. As another competent authority has remarked, full use will only be made of the school library (and of books in general) when the teachers are themselves interested in books and their place in education.

To return to children's work in public libraries, the need for qualified staff was emphasized at the beginning of this chapter. The atmosphere of freedom is especially important in the children's department, because the child may not resist so readily as an adult any tendency to regiment or guide excessively his reading (though he may stay away as a result). The main guidance to be given lies in the selection of the stock ; if it is all good of its kind he can come to no harm whatever he fancies. The task of the children's librarian is thus to help the child to get what he wants ; but that is only the negative aspect of the work. He can and

should devote himself to the display of book resources and to showing their relation to the child's varied interests. Display is not a matter only of exhibitions and other questions of physical arrangement; there are other ways in which books can be brought to the child's notice—story hours, clubs for those with special hobbies, library magazines, and the like. In brief, the library should be as little as possible an institution to which the youngsters come just hurriedly to choose a book and depart, but as much as possible a genuine part of their lives, associated as far as it can be with all their interests, a place they like and enjoy using.

The children's librarian needs, therefore, above all, those personal qualities which fit one living in such a pleasant place. He must have wide interests, a sound knowledge of books—and not only "children's" books—and a genuine enthusiasm though not an excessive zeal. He must not dominate the library; he must be a part of it. Youth would seem a prerequisite (admitting that youth is not always a matter of years). For that reason work with children should be a phase in the professional career rather than a watertight department of librarianship—a phase only entered by those who are temperamentally suited, nevertheless. This interesting work should be open equally to men and women provided they are young and pliable. Most of our objection to men in this field is based upon old experiences of the wrong sort of men. One of the advantages of having both men and women is that they can maintain their interest in the children when these grow into adolescence.

This has always been the weakest link in our work—that too high a proportion of young readers are lost when they leave school. Much can be achieved by the library and its staff maintaining the closest contact with all organizations working with young people. The sphere of such influence is, however, not unlimited; many adolescents do not and have no need or desire to belong to youth clubs or the like, but rely on their homes and friends and individual activities. Apart from this, however, the real reason why we "lose" children is that when we do we have never really had them because their use of books is superficial, apart from and not part of their constructive interests. If this statement is true the remedy is clear.

Two unorthodox practices provoke one last observation on this theme. At library "A" limitations of space are such that the two capable amateur librarians considered it impossible to separate adult and juvenile books. So no distinction is made—children's stories are mixed up with novels, and juvenile non-fiction with adult, and the children are free to browse and select at will, subject only to the discretion of the librarian, who could refuse to allow a child to borrow anything obviously unsuitable. Most children choose children's books—and a few adults do likewise on occasion; but a sufficient proportion read "far better books than their parents" to give us serious cause to think. The librarian of "B" is in charge of a big county system and has books for children kept together at his branches, but he does not distinguish between juvenile and adult non-fiction. Instead, he instructs branch librarians to select for the children's corner whatever non-fiction books seem suitable for the young readers and to change them frequently.

These are ideas which call for investigation, for we must not fall into the trap of creating "internal barriers". We are illogical if we, however rightly, state a preference for public libraries as against school libraries because the former are more conducive to continued reading, and then proceed to limit the child's contact with the full range of material.

## CHAPTER IX

### PREMISES, METHODS, FACILITIES, ETC.

If one may generalize, many small places have libraries that are too large, and most large places have libraries that are too small. Neither condition is satisfactory or economical. In the smaller places the position arises partly because many libraries were erected with donated funds, partly because these authorities, being independent and unco-ordinated, have hopefully attempted to do too much, partly because of the deep-rooted idea that a library is essentially a building. This conception has caused the cart to be put before the horse—the building has not helped but has hindered and starved the service, owing to excessive overheads and a type of planning which requires more staff than has ever been available. On the other hand, in the average medium-sized and large town either the premises have been outgrown or, originally planned for “closed” methods, have been unsuccessfully adapted or extended in piecemeal fashion. It has not been sufficiently recognized that inadequate and unsuitable premises are necessarily expensive, because in them less work can be done yet will probably cost more to perform.

The criteria by which premises can be judged are simple and axiomatic. They should be suitable, adequate for present and likely future needs, sufficient in number and suitably sited. They should be comfortable. In style they should be appropriate, pleasant and attractive; when the margin of extra cost can be found, they should be more than this—they should be worthy and beautiful outward expressions of the true spirit of librarianship. They should not demand too large a share of the funds available for library purposes as a whole, though this is more likely to arise from bad planning and unwise provision than from the superior workmanship and materials of a better building.

These criteria are, in general, well observed in recent construction, which has many workmanlike sound premises and a few of real beauty to show clearly what others should be like. Reference has already been made to a few noteworthy county branches; of urban premises, the Stretford and Lostock branches at Stretford, the Cheriton branch at Folkestone, the Crossgates branch at Leeds, the more recent Glasgow branches, and the Huddersfield Central Library are all worthy of study—and there are others. Analysis of the costs of maintenance in relation to the use made of these premises would be illuminating.

They are, however, oases in a desert. A great majority of library buildings are unsuitable, inappropriate, inadequate, expensive or ill-sited. If, therefore, we are to achieve economy and efficiency we must lose some of our excessive respect for bricks and mortar. No shopkeeper, with an eye to profits and costs alike, would hesitate to pull down or relinquish unsuitable and expensive premises; few local authorities have attained to such wisdom. For some years after the war we shall, of course, need to concentrate upon a building programme designed to repair war damage and to provide premises urgently necessary for the maintenance and extension of the service. Sooner or later, however, the soundest policy will involve the demolition of many existing buildings.

The library service is unfortunate in that its period of development coincided with one of the worst of all periods of architecture. Typical libraries of the '80s and '90s stand throughout the breadth and length of the land—ugly, uncomfortable, cold, badly lit, dreary, “undecoratable” monuments to an enthusiasm which paid no heed to the morrow, when overheads had to be met from a penny rate, so long as it had a “worthy” civic edifice. Surely, as a class, libraries are the worst set of buildings to be found in this country. This is not the frivolous personal opinion of one lacking in appreciation of late Victorian virtues. It is born of a dislike of bare softwood block or board floors, of windows

of ornate stone designs which do not admit light, cannot be opened and cannot be cleaned properly, of excessively high rooms roofed with brown planking, rooms which defy the adoption of any modern system of illumination, which are too lofty and draughty to be adequately warmed, which are split up into awkward portions by heavy pillars, arches and interior walls and which are aptly furnished with heavy, high and gloomy bookcases, kitchen chairs and substantial ugly tables. There is no part of Great Britain in which in a day's march you could not find at least one library of which this would be a just description, and you would probably find several. We may have to put up with such premises for a while because there are matters even more important, but let us not pretend that we view them with anything but loathing, or fail to realize how they prejudice the best and fullest use of library services.

The best new buildings have been designed and finished so that they can be redecorated easily and cheaply. This is a most important point completely overlooked by the earlier architects. What use is it that a building looks bright and attractive when it is new, if it must steadily degenerate in appearance thereafter? We want buildings that can be *kept* bright and clean as long as they will be in use, be it twenty or fifty years. Simplicity, an absence of ornament, plain and easily accessible walls and ceilings, painted or easily cleaned woodwork—these make for easy redecoration. By contrast, one not large central library that was visited cost £650 for each redecoration (pre-war rates); obviously it was a very long time since so much had been expended.

There are a few examples of really comfortable libraries, with chairs in which one can sit without acute discomfort for two or three hours, with curtains at the windows, flowers on the tables, pictures on the walls, with clean and pleasant flooring or floor covering. Unfortunately, most libraries are uncomfortable, drab, uninviting and institutional. There is no justification for such conditions; they may have been necessary in the days of rate limitation if we are right to assume that an uncomfortable chair costs less than a comfortable one and that it is cheaper to try to keep a woodboarded floor scrubbed than it is to maintain a pleasant, durable surface. Unsuitable conditions, though they might be tolerated by Spartans, prevent good results; it stands to reason that a reader cannot do work of the same quality in a badly lit, draughty, gloomy room as in a pleasant, comfortable one; many readers are deterred from using such unsavoury places; and—most significant—bad premises encourage bad users. The tramps, loafers and undesirables of other types who frequent the old-fashioned dreary museums, reading rooms and even reference libraries, do *not* visit the clean, modern places. The best way to avoid abuse in libraries is to have premises in which abuse is patently out of place. This has been proved by experience. Though the remark is out of place, let us add that precisely the same applies to the physical condition of book stocks.

The older libraries also generally lack proper staff accommodation either for work or for rest. Such duties as cataloguing, preparation of stock, typing, administration and the like are mostly performed either in the public rooms, or in various holes and corners in stack rooms and basements. Even staff lavatory accommodation is frequently scanty and unsavoury. By way of contrast, the excellent staff accommodation at the new Huddersfield Central Library, the Leeds Crossgates Branch, or the older converted Pontypridd Central Library are noteworthy.

Surprisingly often, storage space for books is also lacking. Under present unco-ordinated conditions this means that those libraries which have nowhere to keep "reserve" stock must either throw it away or retain it on the open shelves which are consequently overcrowded and unattractive. This is discussed elsewhere. Apart from this, however, *some* storage is needed at every library building, if only enough for books temporarily withdrawn for binding, etc. Accommodation for consumable stores, stationery, etc. is often not sufficient.

Just as we find serious and indefensible variations in the standards of book supply, staffing and premises, so we find this lack of reasonable uniformity and sound practice displayed in every aspect of library method and in the various facilities granted or denied to readers.

*Open Access Lending Departments.* The necessity for giving readers full and convenient access to adequate stocks in all lending departments no longer calls for any argument. It is axiomatic. Yet of the one hundred central (or main) libraries visited, six (three of them the central libraries of towns with over 100,000 population) do not provide complete open access. In two of these large towns *all* the central lending stock is closed; in the third all the *non-fiction* is closed. Of the three small places, one is entirely closed, one has its fiction and a few popular non-fiction books in a small open room, the third gives access to a few popular books placed on the counter and to the few juvenile books it possesses.

There is no acceptable excuse for the continuance of this state of affairs. Even where the premises were inadequate for full open access it would seem preferable to undertake drastic weeding out of the stock, the relegation of part to "closed" stores, and the open display of such part of the more useful material as was practicable.

*Cataloguing.* Considering the attention which has been paid to cataloguing in our professional education it is both surprising and disturbing to note the poor quality of the majority of the catalogues provided in urban and county libraries. One or two places do not appear to have any at all; other catalogues are admittedly incomplete or undergoing "revision"; of the remainder the majority are little better than brief indexes to the available stocks. In only one instance are there at branches union catalogues of the material available elsewhere in the system\*; in several places the public catalogues at the central do not include branch stocks. The reason for this inadequacy is easy to find. To provide and maintain a good catalogue is expensive and at present beyond the resources of the average library. The preparation of adequate entries can only be undertaken satisfactorily by a sufficient, well qualified staff equipped with a considerable body of bibliographical and other reference material. Neither staff nor material are available at any but a few of the larger systems. This does not mean that some of the smaller libraries do not make admirable efforts to provide the best possible catalogues; it does mean that most fail. In the average catalogues, typed or written in various styles, descriptions of authors are inadequate and the entries are confined to a brief transcript of the title with no attempt at descriptive or evaluative annotation. Some catalogues are dirty and shabby; few are properly guided. All types were found—card, sheaf, printed, guard books; sometimes more than one type was used in the same system. Classified catalogues with author lists, alphabetical subject lists with author lists, and dictionary catalogues were found variously in use, with no marked preference. Excepting in those closed libraries where the unfortunate readers were compelled to do so there was little evidence that any considerable proportion of readers used the catalogues, which seem primarily to exist for staff use. One is forced to the conclusion that it is uneconomic and impracticable for each library to compile and provide its own catalogue. There should be established a national cataloguing department which will do the work once and for the benefit of all libraries, more efficiently than it can be done under present circumstances. This matter is considered in a later section of this report (Ch. XVI). There we shall discuss also another most important aspect of catalogue provision which is mentioned here in passing. Excepting for the excellent and useful special lists published by a few county and urban libraries and the bibliographies issued by the County Libraries Section of the Library Association, all cataloguing at present provided is confined to the listing of books actually in the stocks of the libraries concerned (almost invariably in the case of

\* We do not suggest that it is practicable to provide "union" catalogues at branches (see Ch. XVI.).

branches, to the stock of that branch alone). Agreeing that one of the functions of the catalogue is to act as a guide to the place on the classified shelves where specific books or subjects can be found, an even more important purpose of a catalogue is to tell the readers (and the staff) what books are available in the fields in which they are interested and to indicate which will be most appropriate. So long as there was no co-operation between libraries, and readers were thus limited to the books in their own libraries, a catalogue of the library's own stock was probably sufficient. Once co-operation widened the range of material available such a catalogue became not only inadequate but even harmful by suggesting to the reader that the limitations still pertained. What is needed now is guidance to the books which are *not* in stock locally but which can be obtained. Of this, however, more later.

The variety of catalogues in use militates against the co-ordination of libraries. Each system may have its particular virtues and defects, but we think that the time has arrived when, in the light of the considerable experience that has been gained, the profession can decide upon one type of catalogue best calculated to serve the needs of users, and our efforts should then be directed to securing its gradual adoption universally. For this purpose the Library Association should set up an Advisory Committee.

*Classification.* Again it is needless to urge the necessity for the proper classification of books in all departments. Of the lending departments of one hundred urban libraries, twelve (four of them in towns of 40-50,000 population) are *not* classified at all beyond a very rough grouping of the books into main classes. Several more of the reference departments are unclassified. Elsewhere the standard of classification seems reasonably good. A number of libraries have however made modifications in the printed schemes—occasionally very considerable. While admitting the need for the modification and improvement of existing published schemes it would seem that this again is a task which should be tackled by a Committee of the Library Association with a view to establishing (and keeping up to date) a scheme suitable for use throughout the country. Local variations can only tend to confuse readers, especially if, as we hope, interavailability of libraries will be increased. They also militate against co-ordination; an outstanding example of this is found in a system consisting of two libraries similar in size but each classified on an entirely different system.

One large library system uses a scheme of its own. All others seen use either Dewey or Brown. The several librarians using Brown expressed satisfaction with it. This of course is a matter for consideration by the Committee—but it would appear that there are serious disadvantages in the use of more than one system.\*

Proposals for the revision of whatever methods of classification and cataloguing are in use in any library are invariably countered by the objection that the task is too big to be tackled, an argument backed by frightening statistics of the number of entries to be altered and books to be relettered. We have no illusions as to the work involved, but we cannot allow this factor to perpetuate unsatisfactory methods. If the work can be justified the necessary staff should be made available. In any case the work would be spread over a long period—and it would be part of the terms of reference of the proposed committee to suggest the methods of revision likely to prove most economical and to cause the least interference with the service. This task of revision would also be linked up with schemes for stock co-ordination and for the publication of basic bibliographies.

\* We are not advocating "Dewey" however. It must surely now be recognized that, as it stands, it is a most unsatisfactory scheme, inadequate in many important sections and confusing and difficult to apply. Drastic revision and the plentiful use of explanations and "decisions" might meet the case; it might instead be better to compile a completely new scheme.

*Number of books allowed to borrowers, fines, period of loan.* A majority of libraries still adhere to the old scale of two books per reader at any one time; usually, only one of these may be fiction. Some have increased the number to three or four in order to help readers who in wartime find it difficult to come to the library. The librarians of others, while readily agreeing that two at a time are not sufficient, state that war conditions have made improvement impossible—they find it difficult to obtain enough books for the present basis.

This, though a position we may now have to accept, is one we must face in future. Stocks should be sufficient to meet reasonable needs. For some readers two books may be sufficient—though even the fiction reader must often come to the end of a novel at a time when it is most inconvenient or impossible to obtain a fresh one. Many, however, must find the limitation a hindrance to the full use of books. They may require several for comparative or complementary studies; they may desire to pursue two or three or more different themes concurrently (e.g. the student who wants one or more books to help him in his studies, who is also interested in current affairs, who plays the violin and also appreciates lighter relaxation). Surely the only person qualified to judge how many books he needs is the reader himself; he has to carry them to and fro and look after them and pay fines if he forgets to return them. A small minority may abuse the privilege; one must not therefore penalize the majority, but instead seek means of preventing abuse. The need for sufficient books is of course greater where they have to be obtained at infrequent intervals (e.g. from county centres or vans).

Since it is to the advantage of all to promote and facilitate use, all regulations should be suspect which tend to decrease it. Some libraries already display a much more liberal attitude than the majority. One library (and there are probably others) allows each non-fiction reader to borrow as many books as he likes and to keep them as long as he likes up to a month, subject to the understanding that he will return any item immediately if it is required by another reader. After about a month he receives a reminder (for which he has to pay) upon which he may either ask for renewal (which he was able to do before) or return the book. If he does neither he is either charged with the cost of replacing the book or legal steps for its recovery are, at least, threatened. No fines are charged.

Elsewhere borrowers are allowed, at the time of issue, to say how long they wish to keep a book (if they want it for more than the usual fortnight) and they will then not be charged fines, saving that if another borrower wants it they must return it at the end of the first fortnight.

Several libraries allow readers, on application, to borrow in excess of the regulation number; in several places borrowers can have three tickets. In the few libraries where the Dickman or a similar charging system is used, the number may be unlimited.

Fines are usual, though there are places where they are not charged. They are undoubtedly an evil, though whether a "necessary evil" or not is a matter we should investigate more thoroughly. They undoubtedly deter many, especially children, from using the library.

*Miscellaneous points.* (a) A few libraries still charge readers 1d. or 2d. for tickets. This is illegal, and serves no useful purpose.

(b) One was surprised to find a few libraries which did not allow borrowers to reserve non-fiction. This would seem essential to the proper use of a library by purposive readers.

(c) The usual system of requiring non-ratepayers (other than "minors") to secure guarantors is not only prejudicial but may be unfair, and it is usually an empty formality wasteful of good time. It is undesirable from the point of view of both the applicant and the guarantor. The former may not know anyone sufficiently to ask him to act as guarantor—or may not wish to do so. The latter often has to give his guarantee because he does not like to refuse (e.g. landlords,



tradespeople), but he has no control over the acts of the applicant in this respect. It is an empty formality because we very seldom take any action against guarantors (thus favouring those who do not meet their obligations, since most do)—and if we did we should soon kill the system by making ratepayers very chary of acting as guarantors. Moreover we have no means of verifying signatures and would have great difficulty in supporting our case if their authenticity were queried. Could we indeed ever actually *prove* that a borrower had ever borrowed a specified book if he were to deny the fact?

If the system of National Registration is continued after the war—which is not improbable as many useful purposes could be served—might we not use this as the basis of borrowers' registration? All we really need is evidence of the borrower's identity and place of residence. We could obtain this from his identity card and could then be satisfied if he signed a general form agreeing to return within a specified time, or on request, any book he borrowed, from any public library in the country. Tickets should, of course, be national. All but a very few would use them normally at their nearest library. But if we envisage a co-ordinated library system we presuppose many who will take advantage of their new opportunities to go to larger libraries when their local branches do not meet their needs.

(d) Statistics of the "number of tickets in force" were found to be an unreliable index of the use made of the library. The total number of tickets in use on a given day is a better criterion. Another interesting record kept by one librarian (in connection with the planning of new developments) was of the number of households, within various distances from the service points, of which one member at least was enrolled. This shows that the members of that household know that there is a library and can use it if they want to.

(e) Two or three libraries still maintain "pay collections", i.e. subscription libraries operating from the public library premises. Even if these are so constituted as to be technically legal they are prejudicial to the best interests of the majority of readers and contrary to the spirit of public librarianship.

(f) We encountered a few collections of books bequeathed or donated on condition that they were kept together and not incorporated in the general stock. As these seemed almost invariably to be used less than would otherwise be the case, the practice is not recommended to intending benefactors.

## CHAPTER X

### STAFF

*The Staffing of Urban Libraries.\** Of all sections of the report this is one of the most difficult to write. Though the Library Association possesses a considerable amount of data relating to the numbers and salaries of library staffs this is not so nearly complete as is its information on other matters such as expenditure, issues, stock, etc. The war has also caused such transformations that in most cases conditions noted during the tour were far from normal; fortunately this took place before there was any serious displacement of women. The great complication, however, is caused by the hopelessly varied nomenclature of grading and by insufficient information as to the numbers and qualifications of those in each grade. One can only hope that the position is not really so bad as it unfortunately appears.

However we can only speak of it as we have seen it, checking and amplifying first-hand impressions by much study of available data, and we have no alternative but to regard it as grave. Most libraries employ far too few people, too many of them are not properly qualified, a much larger number than we had previously believed do not possess the necessary minimum educational qualifications, scales are seriously too low, there are far too few genuine senior people and most of these are grossly underpaid.

The truth of this indictment is made evident in our consideration of all other phases of librarianship, for without adequate staff there cannot be good librarianship even if, as is far from the case, there are sufficient suitable books. We have consistently stressed the importance of stock because it *is* the paramount factor, since without stock our staffs cannot be effective. But the converse is true—that it is little use having books without staff. We need both—and must take all possible steps to get them.

*Number of staff.* So long as library systems remain large and small, good and bad, well or under developed, it is quite impossible to say, on any comparative basis, how many assistants any particular library needs. If a library is bad, or gives only a partial service, it needs fewer assistants; if it is doing well most of the things a progressive library can do, it needs more. Even so, there are other factors which, within two areas with comparable standards, might call for more or fewer assistants—such, for example, as the geographical distribution of the population and its influence upon the number and siting of service points. Consequently this is a case where “averages” may be particularly misleading unless the circumstances behind them are appreciated, doubly so as totals of the numbers of staff take no account of their quality, and several unqualified low-grade assistants will surely be less effective than a smaller number more appropriately trained and graded.

If we take, as the only possible index, the number of total population served by each assistant we find very wide variations which bear a striking relation to observed standards of service. Working on 1939 totals of staff and 1939 populations we find in each population group that all well-developed services have a population per assistant (in all cases excluding the chief) well below the average and *vice versa*. None of the libraries with a figure of population per assistant much higher than the group average was found to be even reasonably good. The only exceptions to this general rule are the few places where, though the figure is low, the standard of service is not high and this was seen to arise from the employment of a higher proportion of low-grade staff. The following table will illustrate this. Remember that the column “good libraries” excludes those

\* For notes on the staff of county libraries see Ch. III.

which, though maybe doing excellent work *as far as it goes*, are not giving a reasonably full service in relation to that locality. Note also that no London libraries are included in this analysis.

	Population Group.	Group average no. of population per assistant.	No. of population per assistant in good libraries.			No. of population per assistant in bad libraries, including badly undeveloped libraries.		
A.	Over 200,000	4,516	2,292	3,147	3,441	8,242	12,459	
			4,285	4,733	4,861			
			5,006					
B.	100-200,000	6,753	3,457			9,081	21,460	40,646
C.	50-100,000	6,429	2,594	4,835		10,051	11,213	12,450
D.	30-50,000	7,521	3,369	3,825	4,026	11,123	14,343	15,135
						18,490	22,470	40,200
E.	10-30,000	8,146	4,315	4,390	5,013	9,325	10,295	11,280
						20,950	29,420	

The higher average figure of the lower population groups is partly explained by the fact that we have excluded the chief throughout and in the smaller places he more and more performs the work of an assistant. The high figure of Group B compared with Group C reflects what is otherwise evident—that for some inexplicable reason library development is on the whole backward in towns of this size. The low figure of the larger cities shows that only in them is it *general* to give a satisfactory library service and only in them, also, are the more advanced and specialized aspects of librarianship really capable of exploitation.

The lesson of this analysis is simple. We know from other evidence that those places of varying sizes where the population per assistant is low are nevertheless *not* employing more people than their work demands and justifies. Hence all which employ fewer people in relation to population are more or less understaffed—whether the reason be that the libraries are not doing their proper work or that the staff are over-worked. There is clear indication that for the proper expansion of a co-ordinated library service we should aim at a staff provision of not less than one assistant per 3,500 to 4,000 of population taking all types of area into consideration; in the more highly developed centres a much lower figure may be sought.

The effects of understaffing were observable—general untidiness, shelves not in order, stock not kept weeded out and revised, inadequate reference work, insufficient attention to individual readers, poor cataloguing not kept up to date, delay in putting new books into circulation, and the like. In general it produced an atmosphere both of inefficiency and of oppression which contrasted ill with the alertness and enthusiasm displayed by staff who had time to do their work properly and yet, because of this, individually achieved much more.

Let us commence our consideration of this complicated subject with a few notes on conditions in some of the smaller libraries visited during the survey.

(a) *Population under 10,000.* Without exception none of these employ trained persons, relying either upon caretaker-librarians or part-time staff.

(b) *Population between 10,000 and 20,000.* Of the places seen, at one the untrained woman chief has no assistance, at another the untrained but capable girl in charge had no help but the part-time assistance of a man caretaker. In at least one other, none of the girls had a school-leaving certificate. At only one, or perhaps two, was there any assistant with any professional training. Salaries for juniors did not exceed £2 per week; the few persons described as seniors attained no more than £3. Of the chief librarians, only two were on the professional Register (one Fellow, one Associate).

(c) *Population between 20,000 and 30,000.* Salaries for juniors are again low on the whole, rising to about £120, while "seniors" go to about £130-£150. There are a few exceptions, e.g. one library (about the best in its group generally)

pays its juniors £52-£180, and two seniors £180-£240. Of the chief librarians, one (and he is a Fellow) is paid as little as £200-£250. Generally the salaries of chiefs range from £300 to £425. Over half the chiefs are on the Register.

(d) *Population between 30,000 and 40,000.* Despite too many examples of bad junior salaries there are several cases of slightly better salaries for seniors (mostly female): £120-£170; £120-£150; £175; £150-£180; £130-£160. There is one bad case—and it is a library where good work is being done—where all assistants, starting at £39 at the age of 15, *finish* at £89 at 20. In this group there are persons designated as “chief assistants” or “deputy librarians” receiving salaries from £180 to £275. There are a few chief librarians receiving £450 and over. Only 40 per cent of the chiefs in the libraries seen in this group were on the Register.

(e) *Population between 40,000 and 50,000.* Salaries in this group are on the whole bad. At one place, no one except the chief receives more than £2; at three others the maximum is £150. At another, all assistants proceed to £190. Again the best library shows the best scale—male and female seniors proceeding to £200, one male senior to £260 and a male branch librarian to £275. Several of the chief librarians receive £450 or over, at least one getting £550. More than half the chief librarians are on the Register.

Speaking generally one had the following impressions regarding all these smaller libraries. Junior and senior salaries were far too low. The appeal of the work, as distinct from the rewards, had undoubtedly attracted a proportion of intelligent and appropriate girls, but many were of the type commensurate with the salaries. Secondly, very few would ever receive an adult living wage. Thirdly, there was far, far too great a disparity between the salary of the chief and that of the next senior person—not that the chiefs get too much but because there seemed to be little recognition of the need for well-qualified, responsible and suitably rewarded higher-grade seniors. Fourthly, though probably no librarian got more than he was worth, several of them were well capable of supervising larger areas and, conversely, several of the smaller areas, had they formed part of a larger system, might well have dispensed with their chiefs and appointed appropriate “branch librarians” instead. In other words, so long as a library, no matter how small, is independent it needs competent direction which is thus partly wasted in so far as its potential sphere is restricted.

(f) *Population over 50,000.* Salaries in the larger towns defy analysis. We must be content with giving a few examples of good and bad scales. How many there are throughout the country that are bad rather than good one can only guess—but the general tendency is unfortunately reflected in the following statement regarding the subscriptions paid by members of the Library Association. There are approximately 6,500 people engaged in library work, of whom 5,000 are personal members of the Library Association. Of those who are not members a small proportion are older people, not of course on the Register, who for various reasons have refrained from joining or have allowed their membership to lapse. The great majority are junior people who have not yet started their studies or who do not even possess the initial educational qualifications. We may safely assume that nearly all these are receiving only small salaries. Members of the Library Association pay a subscription of 10s. 6d. if their salaries do not exceed £150 and £1 1s. if they do not exceed £300. Assuming that none of our members are paying a lower rate than they should—a matter which depends upon their own honesty—about 3,300 are receiving less than £150 per annum, a further 1,200 between £150 and £300 and only 500\* above £300. If we assume that of the non-members 1,200 are getting less than £150, it would seem that 4,500, or nearly 69 per cent of those engaged in library work receive less than £150 per annum. Of course a number of these are quite young people, engaged on junior

\* This total of 500 includes also a number of librarians of university and special libraries and non-professional members.

duties and for whom such salaries are not inappropriate. But unfortunately there is evidence that too many of them are either performing work of a more senior character for which they are being most inadequately rewarded—or, not less to be deprecated, they are filling inadequately posts which the efficiency of the service demands should be filled by better qualified and better rewarded persons.

Our grave concern at this situation is increased when a glance at the subscription records of the Association shows instances of members who have paid only 10s. 6d. for periods of 10 years or even longer—and this may not represent the full term of their library service. Furthermore, there are more than a few persons who are qualified Associates or even Fellows and who are presumably doing suitable work but who yet pay the minimum subscription. Another striking fact is the high amount of “turnover” among women as shown by the very large proportion of existing women members with less than 10 years’ service. Marriage accounts for most of this “turnover”, however.

In considering the following examples of typical scales we must remember that the designations of different grades vary enormously—the “chief assistant” of one authority will be the “senior” of another, and so on. Moreover it is more likely that where the lowest scale has a high maximum it will include a number of people who would have been graded in a “senior” grade had this maximum been less. For example, at “X” *all* juniors proceed to an automatic £300 and the next grade goes to £390; to avoid unreasonably high salary costs only chief assistants and some branch librarians are put in the second grade, all other seniors staying in the first grade where they remain no better off than the incompetents—a strong argument against high initial grades.

Some of these scales are pre-war and may have been slightly altered since then, at least by a cost-of-living bonus. The numbers of those in each grade (where given) also refer to pre-war conditions—thus giving a more normal picture.

The following are typical of the less satisfactory scales :

200,000	“ A ”	Deputy	..	..	no deputy	
		Branch Librarian	..	..		£190-£285
		Seniors	..	..		£156-£208
		Intermediates	..	..		£91-£169
		Juniors	..	..		£26-£117
125,000	“ B ”	Deputy	..	..		£250
		Branch Librarian	..	..		£187
		Male Assistants	..	..		£51 6s. at 16 to £174 at 26
		Female Assistants	..	..		£45 at 16 to £135 at 26
		(£15 per annum extra for Associateship)				
125,000	“ C ”	Deputy	..	..		£325
		(1) Senior Male Assistants	..	..		£273
		(2) Senior Female Assistants	..	..		£143-£169
		(2) Senior Female Assistants	..	..		£120-£143
		(2) Senior Female Assistants	..	..		£117
		1 Male and 14 Female Junior Assistants	..	..		£39-£104
105,000	“ D ”	Deputy	..	..		£200
		3 Male and 1 Female Assistants	..	..		£50-£200
80,000	“ E ”	(m) Deputy	..	..		£310-£350
		Male Senior Assistants	..	..		£130-£230
		Female Senior Assistants	..	..		£105-£180
		Male Junior Assistants	..	..		£55-£115
		Female Junior Assistants	..	..		£50-£85

" F "	(f) Deputy .. ..	£240-£300
	145,000 Male Assistants .. ..	£52-£185
	Female Assistants .. ..	£50-£140
" G "	Deputy .. .. no deputy	
	100,000 (1) Male Chief Assistant ..	£335
	(1) Female Chief Assistant ..	£300-£320
	(1) Male Senior Assistant ..	£245
	(4) Female Senior Assistants ..	£183-£209
	Male Junior Assistants ..	£39-£200
	Female Junior Assistants ..	£39-£170
" H "	Deputy .. .. no deputy	
	95,000 (1) Male Chief Assistant ..	£300
	(1) Female Chief Assistant ..	£160
	(1) Male Branch Librarian ..	£350
	(1) Male Branch Librarian ..	£210
	(1) Male Branch Librarian ..	£150-£175
	(3) Female Senior Assistants ..	? -£135
	(9) Female Junior Assistants ..	? -£110
" I "	Deputy .. ..	£230-£260
	90,000 Male Senior Assistants ..	£130-£150
	Female Senior Assistants ..	? -£130
	Male Junior Assistants ..	£45-£120
	Female Junior Assistants ..	£52-£117

e are among the better systems :

" J "	Deputy .. ..	£600+
	Over (3) Male Senior Assistants	£450-£535
	700,000 (11) Male 1st Class Assistants,	
	Grade B .. ..	£360-£425
	(9) Male 1st Class Assistants,	
	Grade A .. ..	£305-£340
	(2) Female 1st Class Assistants,	
	Grade A .. ..	£305-£340
	(9) Male 2nd Class Assistants	£215-£295
	(13) Female 2nd Class Assistants	£215-£295
	(4) Male Clerical, Grade A ..	£211-£246
	(40) Female Clerical, Grade A ..	£211-£246
	(4) Male General Division	£130-£194
	(66) Female General Division	£130-£194
	(50) Male and Female Junior	
	Division .. ..	£34 (at 14) to £112

(The nomenclature of the above is that of the general Council scales)

" K "	Deputy .. ..	£500+
	250,000 (4) Male Librarians in charge	£350-£500
	(2) Male Librarians in charge	£300-£350
	Female Assistants in charge	£225-£300
	Female Senior Assistants ..	£150-£220
	Female Assistants of 21 or over	£120-£200
	Male Assistants of 20 or over	£105-£270
	Male Assistants with additional	
	qualification .. ..	£170-£350
	Male and Female Junior	
	Assistants .. ..	£52-£104

" L "	Deputy	.. ..	£350-£600
	Over	(1) Male Chief Cataloguer ..	£375-£400
	800,000	(1) Male Superintendent of Branches .. ..	£375-£400
		(1) Male Commercial Librarian	£375-£400
		(7) Male Chief Assistant in Reference and some Branch Librarians ..	£320-£350
		(6) Male Senior Assistants in Reference and some Branch Librarians ..	£270-£315
		(3) Female Senior Assistants in Reference and some Branch Librarians ..	£270-£315
		(2) Male Senior Assistants in Reference and some Branch Librarians ..	£215-£260
		(4) Female Senior Assistants in Reference and some Branch Librarians ..	£215-£260
		(14) Male Assistants of 22 or over .. ..	£130-£200
		(15) Male Assistants of 16 to 21	£45-£120
		(65) Female Assistants ..	£33-£182 (at 27)
	" M "	Deputy .. ..	£600+
	1,000,000	(1) Male Inspector of Branches	£535+
		(1) Male Chief Assistant ..	£522+
		(1) Male—Grade F ..	£500-£550
		(2) Males—Grade E ..	£400-£485
		(9) Males—Grade D ..	£375-£425
		(9) Males—Grade C ..	£315-£360
		(8) Males—Grade B ..	£245-£300
		(12) Males—Grade A ..	£140-£235
		(about 40) Male Juniors ..	£45 at 16-£120 at 21
		(1) Female—Grade F ..	£300-£320
		(5) Females—Grade E ..	£265-£295
		(3) Females—Grade D ..	£235-£260
		(7) Females—Grade C ..	£190-£230
		(about 25)—Grade B ..	£160-£185
		(about 60)—Grade A ..	£105-£155
		(about 60)—Juniors ..	£40 at 16 to £105 at 21
The following are in or near London :			
" N "	Deputy	.. ..	£375-£450
	115,000	(2) Sub and Branch Librarians	£325-£425
		(?) Senior Assistants ..	£240-£300
		(?21) Junior Assistants ..	£65-£240
" O "	Deputy	.. ..	£420-£500
	145,000	Sub and Branch Librarians ..	£340-£400
		Senior Assistants .. ..	£200-£280
		Junior Assistants .. ..	£60-£230
" P "	Deputy	.. ..	£400-£500
	95,000	(4) Sub and Branch Librarians	£285-£450
		(5) Seniors .. ..	£225-£390
		(12) Juniors .. ..	£75-£300

Mainly male staff—same scale for females.

" Q "	Deputy .. .. .	£500-£600
	200,000 Sub and Branch Librarians ..	£255-£500
	Female Seniors .. ..	£180-£255
	Female Juniors .. ..	£90-£180
" R "	Deputy .. .. .	£450-£500
	90,000 (2) Male Sub and Branch Librarians .. ..	£405-£450
	(2) Male Sub and Branch Librarians .. ..	£315-£390
	(1) Female Branch Librarian .. ..	£315-£390
	(2) Male Seniors .. ..	£315-£390
	(5) Male Juniors .. ..	£75-£300
	(11) Female Juniors .. ..	£75-£300
" S "	Deputy .. .. .	£550-£640
	125,000 Male Sub and Branch Librarians ..	£400-£520
	Male Seniors .. ..	£310-£370
	Male and Female Juniors .. ..	£85-£290

Before leaving this subject, to which we return in Ch. XVII, a few further points may be noted. First, the rewards offered to the higher senior officers in the large systems compare unfavourably with the salaries paid to chief librarians in many small towns. Clearly there should be on the staff of all large libraries several men of a high order of ability ; in fact most large libraries have some such men. If there are not enough, it is clearly because the inducements are lacking. This is a serious matter. Just as ordinary junior and lower senior grades will determine largely the type of people who enter librarianship so do the salaries of the important posts bring to the work more or fewer of the men and women of outstanding ability who are necessary if we are to do our most important work thoroughly and if we are to make an effective impact upon the outside world. Secondly, there are far too few "subject-specialists" employed in library work—and, indeed, as things are, the opportunities for their employment are extremely rare.



## CHAPTER XI

### FINANCIAL ASPECTS

In this chapter we shall—unless it is specifically stated to the contrary—concern ourselves with conditions as they were immediately before the war. The effects of the war upon expenditure and income are considered in Ch. XIX. The war has brought increased expenditure. Much of it would have come anyhow as the result of natural development. Much has been expended on books to meet increased demands. Other increases are, however, due to abnormal needs, such as the payment of salaries to serving members of staffs, war risks insurances, air raid precautions, and the like; similarly the more exceptional reductions in expenditure can be directly ascribed to war-made causes. Therefore, as we are considering library expenditure primarily with a view to seeing how far it has determined normal pre-war conditions and how far it must be modified to meet normal post-war conditions, we deal here with figures (and population, etc.) on the basis of the year 1938-9.

Both for purposes of convenience and comparison and because we dislike too much differentiation between county and urban services we treat of both in this chapter.

*The Total Expenditure* of the local authorities of Great Britain and Northern Ireland upon public library services in 1938-9 was £3,177,960, of which £2,626,408 was expended by urban authorities and £551,552 by county authorities. This expenditure represented less than one-half of one per cent of the total expenditure of the local authorities from all sources (i.e. including contributions from the state, receipts from public utility undertakings, etc.) and was less than three per cent of the total amount expended by local authorities on elementary and higher education.

The total expenditure was distributed as follows:

	England.	Wales.	Scotland.	Total.
	£	£	£	£
Urban .. ..	2,255,025	84,463	257,083	2,596,571
County .. ..	439,575	23,194	82,122	544,891
Total .. ..	2,694,600	107,657	339,205	3,141,462

The total amount expended in Northern Ireland was £36,498 (£29,837 urban; £6,661 county).

*Expenditure per head.* The average expenditure per head in 1938-9 (i.e. the total expenditure divided by the total population, and allowing for the small number of areas for which details were not available) was as follows:

	England.	Wales.	Scotland.	N. Ireland.	Gt. Britain and N.I.
	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.
Urban .. ..	1 9	1 6½	1 9	1 0½	1 8½
County .. ..	8½	4½	8¾	3	8
Urban and County	4½	11½	1 4½	8	1 4½

These "national" averages, though they are useful as an index to progress when compared with similarly computed averages for other years, do not in themselves give a true picture of standards of service as we find them throughout the country. A few larger places well above the average or a few well below will seriously influence the figure. Further analysis is therefore desirable.

First of all, how far does the national average represent a "usual" standard—or, in other words, how many of the local authorities expend a *per capita* amount roughly equivalent to the "average"? Secondly, how many *people* living in towns and counties receive an "average" service? To find the answers

to these questions we have analysed *per capita* expenditure as shown below. The first column gives the expenditure per head in groups of 7d. (a division suggested by a "whole number" division of the urban average of 21d.). The second column gives the number of *authorities* in each group, and the third the *population served* by these authorities. For the purposes of allocation, all places expending sums under each penny have been counted in the group for the penny below—e.g. 7d., 7½d., 7¾d., and 7½d. are all counted as 7d. The population of *each* authority was taken to the nearest 1,000.

Expenditure <i>per capita</i> .	No. of Authorities.	Population served by these Authorities.
A. Under 8d. . . . .	88	8,968,000
B. 8d. and under 1s. 3d. . . . .	145	11,219,000
C. 1s. 3d. and under 1s. 10d. . . . .	174	11,757,000
D. 1s. 10d. and under 2s. 5d. . . . .	78	9,507,000
E. 2s. 5d. and under 3s. . . . .	27	2,269,000
F. 3s. and over . . . . .	12	1,425,000

Thus if we take the medium groups, C and D, we find that 21,264,000, or 47·1 per cent of the total population, are getting, in very wide terms indeed, an "average" service. But whereas 20,187,000, or 44·7 per cent are getting a service *below* these medium groups, only 3,694,000, or 8·2 per cent, are getting a service *above* this average. If in our calculations we included—as indeed we should—all those people who have no library service at all, the situation would be seen to be even worse than the above percentages indicate.

Places in the lowest group, A, can have no library provision worthy of the name; in areas in group B it must be seriously defective.

Of the 8,968,000 people in group A, 8,358,000 are in county areas and 610,000 are in urban areas. Of the 11,219,000 in group B, 6,811,000 are in counties and 4,408,000 are in urban areas.

Low expenditure in the counties is indeed largely responsible for the high percentage of population in these groups. Taking urban libraries alone, 17·2 per cent of the (urban) populations are in groups A and B (below the average), 70·2 per cent are in the average groups C and D, and 12·6 per cent are in groups E and F (above the average).

To present the situation from a different angle, if we take expenditure of 1s. 9d. as the dividing line, then 70·8 per cent of the total population (urban and county) have a worse and 29·2 per cent a better service. All the counties fall well on the lower side of the line. Consequently, of the urban populations alone, 55 per cent get a service below the 1s. 9d. level.

Reference to the table at the beginning of this chapter will show that there are marked "national" differences. A further analysis of the libraries (urban and county) in the different "regions" (i.e. of the areas covered, somewhat arbitrarily, by the Regional Bureaux schemes) show the following striking differences :

Region.	Expenditure <i>per capita</i> .
	s. d.
London (Metropolitan Boroughs) . . . . .	2 1·31
North Western . . . . .	1 8·88
Yorkshire . . . . .	4·9
Scotland . . . . .	4·51
South-Eastern . . . . .	4·5
West Midlands . . . . .	2·47
Northern . . . . .	1·11
East Midlands . . . . .	·07
South Western . . . . .	11·5
Wales and Monmouthshire . . . . .	11·22
Northern Ireland . . . . .	8·08

*Expenditure in County Library Systems.* The following table shows the *per capita* expenditure on county libraries in more detail :

Exp. per cap.	ENGLAND.		WALES.		SCOTLAND.		TOTALS.	
	No. of Auth's.	Pop. served in 000's.	No. of Auth's.	Pop. served in 000's.	No. of Auth's.	Pop. served in 000's.	No. of Auth's.	Pop. served 000's.
Under 1d.	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1d.	—	—	—	—	1	8	1	8
2d.	—	—	1	250	—	—	1	250
3d.	3	347	3	238	1	28	7	613
4d.	6	1,604	2	355	2	48	10	2,007
5d.	10	2,275	2	113	3	67	15	2,455
6d.	3	402	—	—	7	527	10	929
7d.	8	1,944	3	146	1	6	12	2,096
8d.	6	1,508	1	88	3	158	10	1,534
9d.	3	1,721	1	25	3	378	7	2,124
10d.	3	1,219	—	—	4	406	7	1,625
11d.	—	—	—	—	1	174	1	174
1s.	1	75	—	—	—	—	1	75
1s. 1d.	1	270	—	—	—	—	1	270
1s. 2d.	1	835	—	—	2	174	3	1,009
1s. 3d.	1	666	—	—	—	—	1	666
1s. 4d.	—	—	—	—	1	33	1	33
1s. 5d.	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1s. 6d.	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1s. 7d.	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1s. 8d.	—	—	—	—	1	21	1	21
	46	12,666	13	1,215	30	2,008	89	15,889

This shows that 87 per cent of the population served by county libraries got a service costing less than 1s. per head ; 33·6 per cent got one costing less than 6d. Making full allowance for those elements in the county service as at present organized (voluntary centre librarians, etc.) which tend to lower expenditure as compared with urban services, this is not a situation we can face with equanimity. Some of the symptoms have already been discussed.

The effect of expenditure is very real. After grading 20 varied county systems seen during the survey into the five groups—bad ; poor ; fair ; moderately good ; and good—the total expenditure per head was then noted, with the following striking but natural results :

Total expenditure per head in pence.								
Bad	..	..	2·5 ;	3·5 ;	4·0 ;	4·5 ;	4·5	
Poor	..	..	4·5					
Fair	..	..	7·0 ;	7·5 ;	8·5 ;	9·0 ;	9·0	
Moderately good			7·5 ;	9·0 ;	9·7			
Good	..	..	10·5 ;	11·5 ;	12·5 ;	13·0 ;	14·75 ;	15·75

Expenditure on books is generally low. Even in the "good" counties seen it did not in 1938-9 exceed 6·6d., the average for that group being about 5d., which is far from an adequate amount. In the bad counties it descends to such ludicrous amounts as 1d., 1·7d., 2d. ; in two or three counties not visited it is even less than 1d. It is utterly ridiculous to pretend that any useful kind of

library service can be given to a community on such lines. From all the evidences of the survey, backed by the opinion of progressive county librarians, there is no reason to place the desired figure at less than 9d. per head for books alone.

*Expenditure in Urban Library systems.* Thirty-two urban libraries (all but two serving less than 46,000 population) expended 7d. or less. Needless to say, a 7d. urban service is much worse than a 7d. county service; these 32 (serving 610,000 people in all) must be regarded as inefficient to the point of being virtually worthless. Another 115 urban libraries spent between 8d. and 1s. 2d. inclusive, 4,408,000 people receiving this unsatisfactory standard of provision. On the other hand, 78 library authorities (serving 9,507,000) spent between 1s. 10d. and 2s. 4d. inclusive, 27 others (serving 2,269,000) spent between 2s. 5d. and 2s. 11d., 10 more (serving 1,211,000) spent between 3s. and 3s. 6d., and 2 London Boroughs (jointly serving 214,000) spent 3s. 8d. and 4s. 3d. respectively.

Frankly there is not to be observed in the urban field that close relation between expenditure and observable standards of service that was apparent in the counties. For this a variety of factors is responsible. For example, it is not possible to assess so easily the standard of branch coverage in the towns as in the counties; again, in towns the effect of low or reasonable salaries will have a bigger effect upon the budget as more staff are employed; thirdly, building costs are more likely to disturb averages; fourthly, the size factor in towns has more influence upon costs than it has in the counties, as in the towns resources can be concentrated and consequently the big town is at a very considerable advantage, whereas all counties must spread most of their resources.

The following lessons are, however, clear:

(1) Those places which are giving outstanding services all (excepting a few where salaries are bad) spent above the average both in total and, with one exception, on books, as the following examples show:

	Pop. 30-40,000				Pop. 40-50,000				Pop. 50-100,000				Pop. 100- 200,000				Pop. over 200,000			
	s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.
Total Expenditure per head	2	3	2	1	2	7½	2	2½	2	9	2	0	3	3	3	1	2	11½		
Expenditure per head on books	9½		6½		9		7½		7½		9		7½		4½		6½			

(2) The average of 1s. 9d. is far from sufficient. Fine, if limited, work is being done by a few libraries spending round about this amount; the great majority are patently unsatisfactory and others are frankly poor.

By way of quite independent evidence let us note how much is being spent per head *on books* by each of the libraries seen where the total *per capita* expenditure in 1938-9 was between 1s. 7d. and 1s. 11d.: 2·2d., 2·8d., 2·9d., 3·0d., 3·0d., 3·0d., 3·1d., 3·3d., 3·3d., 3·4d., 3·5d., 3·5d., 3·6d., 3·7d., 3·9d., 4·0d., 4·0d., 4·0d., 4·0d., 4·2d., 4·2d., 4·4d., 4·4d., 5·1d. (including binding) and 6d. Can we suggest that any of these, except perhaps the last, is spending enough on the one element which above all determines whether a library is or is not of genuine value? These places are obviously not spending more on books because they cannot do so unless they can increase their total budgets; the claims of the other items (salaries, premises, etc.), however ill they themselves may be provided, are inexorable. Examination elsewhere of prevailing standards of salaries show clearly that we need to spend considerably more to secure and suitably to reward sufficient appropriate staff. The evidence of our eyes will prove that we have not wasted our substance upon extravagant premises. What then is a desirable and necessary figure of expenditure per head? If I may be allowed to speak personally I would note that I have been, successively, in charge of the two library services in the country which spend the highest amount per head of population. Never in my eleven years in these two boroughs have I felt that I had anything like enough to spend on these services. When saying this I do not imply any lack of appreciation of the support of these two progressive

authorities; on the contrary they have set a splendid example to others. My point is, however, that a good library can always do with more books and there is in both these places need for better premises. If I have felt like this, how much more must those with an "average" amount be conscious of their limitations? And I am sure that the librarian of that great city which spends 3s. 1d. per head would agree that he is still far from the goal of complete service.

Therefore we should avoid fixing any *per capita* sum as even a distant national objective. Certainly the present average should be doubled. The best and wisest course, we suggest, is to think not of the total but of its principal components—books, staff and service points. We may, by all the evidence available, accept a figure of 9d. per head for books as a modest but sound national average (provided the unit of library service is large enough). Elsewhere we propose a scale of salaries which, again, being based upon existing good practice and the accepted scales of a nearly comparable occupation, cannot be regarded as excessive. These two items together will dictate largely the required income. The third factor must be assessed in the light of existing conditions and requirements. It will differ considerably from place to place and will change as post-war opportunities enable us to provide additional premises and new instead of old. This factor is, however, one that is assessable on the basis of concrete evidence and not a matter to be judged by theoretical standards.

*Ability to Provide Library Services.* There can be no doubt that the wealth of the community varies very considerably from place to place, even from region to region. Broadly speaking the relative ability of a community to provide not only libraries but all public services depends upon its financial resources. The relation may not be close but there is clearly a stage when it becomes increasingly difficult for an authority to maintain the standards it may desire. Conversely there is every probability that those communities which are less able to spend are just those in which the need for public services is greatest. The system of "weighted exchequer grants" and other devices for tempering the wind to the shorn lamb provide some relief to the poorer communities but it has never been suggested that they go any appreciable way towards producing equality of ability to pay for needed services. This is for us an important matter for three reasons: (a) if a community is trying its best to provide library services but cannot reasonably raise sufficient funds, we cannot blame it for failure. On the contrary (b) we must ask ourselves whether we are not justified in seeking such support from national funds as will make adequate libraries possible—at least until there is some more general method for equalizing local ability. (c) Local inability tends to prejudice library provision to a degree in excess of the total relative inability because the authority which cannot afford good libraries cannot afford anything else and so the library may be and often is sacrificed for the needs of apparently, or even genuinely, more urgent and important local services.

The relation of service to ability must therefore be examined, if briefly. To what extent is inability a genuine limiting factor and to what extent are deficiencies due not to inability but to apathy and lack of knowledge?

Though we recognize that, owing to differences in methods of valuation and assessment, it is not a completely accurate criterion we have no other to use than that of rateable value per head. At least it is sufficiently indicative for present purposes.

Consider first the counties. Again, twenty representative counties seen on the survey are chosen. If we arrange the counties in order of rateable value and note underneath each the expenditure per head on libraries, we get the following table:

R.V. per cap.	£3.7;	£3.7;	£3.7;	£3.7;	£3.9;	£4.6;	£4.6;	£4.8;	£4.9;	£4.9.
Exp. per cap.	2.5d.	4d.	4.5d.	12.5d.	9d.	4.5d.	9d.	10.5d.	7d.	13d.
R.V. per cap.	£5.5;	£5.5;	£6.1;	£6.3;	£6.5;	£6.8;	£6.8;	£7.1;	£10.3;	£10.3.
Exp. per cap.	4.5d.	14.75d.	9d.	7.5d.	15.75d.	11.5d.	7.5d.	3.5d.	9.7d.	8.5d.

Here is definite evidence that the will to give good libraries is the dominant factor; that a rateable value of £3.7 does not *compel* an authority to tolerate a 2½d. service is demonstrated clearly by the county willing to spend over 1s.—and so on.

But in order to obtain that 1s. this county has had, because of its low rateable value, to raise a 3d. rate, though the wealthier counties could obtain the same from a rate of little more than 1d. If the one county has elected to spend a 3d. rate it is because in its wisdom it has so valued libraries as compared with the other services for which it can, and decided to, raise money; the first three decided against libraries. The size of the rate as measured in pence plays a big part in local finances; it is the yardstick by which budgets are judged. If it has to be “kept down” something has to suffer.

Apart from this, however, this county which raises a 3d. rate\* must already have approached the total it can expect even its well-disposed council to levy—yet it is still only *one shilling* per head! In other words, regardless of what is or is not being done, low rateable value implies low limitations. We have calculated the amount per head that would in these twenty counties be produced by a *threepenny* rate calculated on 1940 valuation (as this is generally higher and we would show the position under the more favourable conditions) and the extent of the variation is shown by the following examples:

*Product of a 3d. rate:* Low 10.5d.; 10.75d.; 11d.; 11.35d.; 13.5d.  
High† 18.25d.; 19.5d.; 21.75d.; 31.5d.

There are several other counties (not visited) where the 3d. rate would produce even less, e.g., 10d., 9d., and even 7d. Thus if we agreed that the 1938-9 national average of 1s. 4½d. could provide a satisfactory library service in the average county (which we do *not* agree) some counties would need to raise a rate of 5d., 6d. and even 7d., which is neither reasonable nor likely.

The position of urban authorities is no different. The places seen show rateable values per head so extreme in every population group that it is not rare but usual to find some with two and a half or three times the rateable value per head of others—and more. For example:

	Rateable value per head					
Under 30,000	£3.3;	£3.5;	£3.8.	—£7.9;	£8.1;	£9.0; £9.2.
30,000-50,000	£3.5;	£3.6;	£3.7; £3.8.	—£9.0;	£11.2;	£12.0.
50,000-100,000	£3.6;	£4.3;	£4.5.	—£9.0;	£9.9.	
Over 100,000	£3.1;	£4.4;	£4.8.	—£8.7;	£9.0;	£9.1.

This variation is general—as reference to the “Municipal Year Book” will show. The particular libraries one happened to visit were neither predominantly good nor bad, from any point of view, but normally representative of general conditions.

As with the counties, we find that in a large proportion a 3d. rate would not produce anything like the urban 1938-9 average of 1s. 9d. The following table gives the produce of a 3d. rate on the 1940 valuation (again on the whole a higher figure than the 1938 valuation) in some of the poorer and some of the wealthier towns:

Population	Product of a 3d. rate per head		
Under 30,000	1s.; 1s.	—2s. 1½d.; 2s. 2d.; 2s. 3½d.	
30,000-50,000	10d.; 10½d.; 10½d.; 10½d.; 11½d.; 11½d.; 11½d.;	—2s. 1½d.; 2s. 8d.; 2s. 10½d.	
50,000-100,000	9½d.; 1s. 1½d.; 1s. 1½d.; 1s. 2d.	—1s. 9d.; 1s. 9½d.; 1s. 10d.; 1s. 10d.; 2s. 7d.	
100,000-200,000	8d.; 1s. 0½d.; 1s. 2d.; 1s. 2d.	—1s. 11½d.; 2s. 1½d.; 2s. 2d.	

\* Actually this local authority, which deserves every praise for its keen interest in libraries, has increased this rate considerably since the war.

† Excluding Scottish counties where independent urbans (to which the county may return part of the proceeds) may be included in the valuation.

The best of the towns figuring on the right are far from the wealthiest in the country. Again we find that there are many towns of all sizes where the attainment of the average would involve a 6d. rate.

One further point is most significant—that, in general, with many exceptions both ways, the rateable value per head is lower in small places than in large. This indicates yet another difficulty to be faced by most of the smaller authorities who seek to provide independent library services—the fact that the smaller they are the higher the rate they need to levy to secure even the same expenditure per head of population.

## CO-OPERATION

There is already much co-operation between public libraries—both between neighbouring authorities and through regional and national co-operative schemes. As it has sometimes been argued that salvation would be found in the development of co-operation, it is particularly necessary to consider what is being done, how it could be extended and how far it would meet the various difficulties which we face.

*Extension of services to non-residents.* (1) As a general rule, with few exceptions, libraries allow non-residents who work, or attend educational institutions, to borrow freely from their lending departments as though they were residents. (2) All reference departments and all reading rooms are open to non-residents. (3) Most libraries allow non-residents, other than (1) above, to borrow upon payment of an annual subscription which varies from 2s. 6d. to 10s. 6d.

Difficulty arises often in (1) where the usual local "guarantor" is required (the general principle is discussed elsewhere) because non-resident employees and students may not know local ratepayers whom they can ask to act as guarantors. It is unreasonable to ask employers to accept any financial responsibility for perhaps large numbers of their staff and workpeople.

As to (3), since the subscriber is almost certainly already paying a library rate to an authority which is not giving him what he wants, it is not fair to ask him to pay further to another authority.

*Interavailability of Tickets.* (1) Many libraries have agreed to accept one another's tickets in connection with a wide scheme primarily intended to enable readers on holiday to use their home tickets at the places where they are staying. Though the home towns agree to reciprocate, the scheme is naturally very one-sided. Nevertheless it is appreciated by hundreds of holiday makers and is a happy admission that a good library is an asset to any resort.

(2) The Metropolitan Borough Libraries (with two abstainers) have recently agreed to the interavailability of their tickets. Especially considering the unreal nature of London's local government boundaries this step is long overdue.

(3) There are several similar reciprocal schemes between neighbours—e.g. between Notts County and Derby County, between a group of small towns in North-West Cheshire and North-East Derbyshire, between Oldham, Chadderton, Royton and Crompton, between Hereford County and all its neighbouring counties, etc.

(4) In other cases interavailability is granted on a basis of payment by the authority whose readers make use of the privilege. This basis varies. One city pays its neighbouring county for people who live in one particular district a sum assessed according to the maintenance costs of the county branch they use—surely a complicated treatment of a simple matter. One town pays three of its neighbours on three very different bases: to one it pays 2s. per borrower, to another 10s. per borrower, while to a third it pays a small lump sum. Elsewhere some curious anomalies arise. For example, for some years one town has accepted the tickets of its county without making any charge upon the county; meanwhile it continued the practice, which dated back to long before the county library started, of charging subscribers 10s. 6d. per annum. One day it awakened to the fact that it was thus freely giving services to some people for which it was requiring payment from other precisely similar people. There is also the case of the two libraries—city and county—in the same town; some county residents subscribe to the city library and some city residents subscribe to the county! You pays your money and you takes your choice!



The value to readers of ticket interavailability is limited, however, by the accessibility of the premises to which they can go, by the extent to which they can be told that their tickets *are* interavailable and by differing standards of provision.

In actual fact interavailability exists in only a small proportion of library areas, and where it does it is very little used.

The useful expansion of interavailability is prevented by the great disparity between neighbouring services. How can we expect A, whose inhabitants contribute 3s. 1d. per head, to accept the tickets of B, C and D, which spend respectively 8½d., 11d., and 1s. 1d. per head, when the residents of B, C and D can use the libraries of A almost as easily as their own? There are many such cases. Would such interavailability help to induce B to improve its service or would it make B more likely to neglect it still further?

Nevertheless, as a general principle, interavailability should become universal; once the public know and once libraries are reasonably comparable there can be no virtue in refusing to allow each reader to go wherever he prefers or can best find what he wants.

*Combination of areas and mutual arrangements for service.* (1) As library authorities have for so many generations enjoyed the right to combine for library purposes it is very striking how few have availed themselves of the opportunity.

So far as we know, there are only five instances of combination—all in Scotland, viz. :

Clackmannan County and Alloa.  
Dumfriesshire and Dumfries Burgh.  
Angus County and Kincardine County.  
Perthshire and Kinross County.  
Inverness County and Inverness Burgh.

The Kendal service to Westmorland could be included in this list but for the fact that legally Westmorland is not yet a library authority.

(2) In a few cases small independent authorities instead of relinquishing their powers to the county have retained them but levy the equivalent of the county rate which they pay to the county in return for normal county services—e.g. Coseley (Staffs.), Hythe (Kent), Rainford (Lancs.), Ballymena and Portrush (Antrim) and Coleraine, Port Stewart and Limavady (Londonderry Co.).

(3) There is at least one instance of a small independent authority paying its neighbouring town for library service (Ince-Wigan).

(4) In at least one case (Winnington Parish-Northwich) an independent area has combined with its somewhat larger neighbour for a joint service while still retaining its legal independence.

(5) In at least two cases neighbouring boroughs provide joint branches on their boundaries (Croydon and Lambeth; Camberwell and Lambeth).

(6) A number of counties have arranged with urban libraries (mostly those in small market towns) to accept county readers from the surrounding districts. The county, by way of compensation, lends stock to the urban library.

In at least one case a small urban library acts as a full regional branch, the county providing stock and making a grant for staff salaries.

*Other forms of co-operation.* (1) Several small urban libraries hire stock from the county libraries, paying at the rate of £5 to £7 per hundred volumes, changed two or three times a year. Thus these little places are enabled to perpetuate their existence by making some show of meeting the more general demands of readers.

(2) In one case two independent libraries are administered by a joint Chief Librarian.

(3) In at least one case neighbouring authorities, urban and county, arrange for temporary exchange of staff in order that their assistants may gain experience—an excellent idea.

As will be seen, the extent of local co-operation is small. For this there are several reasons: (a) often, owing to the inefficiency or unsuitability of the units,

there would be little virtue in co-operation under existing conditions ; (b) where the backward authority would have to co-operate on a financial basis with a more progressive one it would cost more than the backward authority is prepared to pay ; (c) local complacency and a mistaken sense of self-sufficiency ; (d) no one has taken the initiative ; (e) suspicion between the authorities concerned.

There are, however, even given good will, over-riding limitations to the value of co-operation. Marked differences in standards necessarily vitiate true co-operation ; obviously, also, co-operation must not be used as a substitute for local provision. Most important, however, are these considerations : unless co-operation is so intimate and thorough as to amount to virtual amalgamation, the stocks, staff and service points of the authorities cannot be properly co-ordinated ; each will, except perhaps for consultation regarding expensive items, continue to buy its own books, with consequent duplications and omissions ; each will normally plan its service points in relation to the needs of its own area. Co-operation may enable an authority to obtain better service for a few of its residents but it cannot help leaving the general standards of provision untouched.

*The Regional Bureau System.* Everywhere librarians spoke most warmly of the importance of the services they received from their Regional Bureaux. The system enabled them—even in the smallest places—to meet some of the specialized needs of their readers. Without it most of the smaller libraries would be unable to offer anything worth while to the serious student ; larger libraries, even the largest, find their potential resources enormously increased.

Detailed—perhaps unnecessarily detailed—accounts of the work of the various bureaux are readily available in their annual reports and that of the National Central Library. There is no need here to repeat this information.

The amazing thing is that, considering how valuable this work can be, so little of it is done. In 1939-40 the number of books lent by all libraries in all the regional systems in England and Wales either to libraries in their own regional systems or (through the N.C.L.) to libraries in other regions, amounted to how many?—one million? two million? Remember there are 491 libraries participating in the scheme. No. The total was 54,635. Put this total in its proper perspective : Manchester alone issues over eight times as many non-fiction books from its central lending library only in a similar period. That is a quantitative indication—to the question of quality we will return.

To this total of books lent by public, university and special libraries to one another we must add 36,638 lent to these libraries from the stock of the N.C.L. or obtained from "outliers" which are not part of regional schemes. Ignoring the fact that some of these 36,638 are lent to libraries which are not members of regional schemes, the total suggests that on an average each library borrows less than 186 volumes per annum from Regional Bureaux and N.C.L. combined. Like all averages this is not the whole truth. Firstly, the average varies from region to region—in 1939-40 in one region the average per library was 86, in another 250, in another 85, in a fourth 111. Much more significant are the individual totals of books borrowed by each library. Take two regions at random. In A, of 40 urban libraries, 14 borrowed fewer than 50 books a year ; of these 6 borrowed less than 20 and 2 others borrowed none. In B, of 75 urban libraries, 37 borrowed less than 50 ; of these 11 borrowed less than 20 and 2 others borrowed none.

We shall, of course, be reminded that we are here concerned with loans of specialist, important, expensive and out-of-print books and that especially here quality is more important than quantity. We are not denying the value of these loans ; even if a proportion—at which we would not guess—are books which should normally be found in any good large library, undoubtedly all were of considerable value to those to whom they were lent. That is not the point. What matters, when we take a broad view, is that the books available to the readers using each one of these libraries consisted solely of the books in its own

stock plus those borrowed through regional schemes. If any one can seriously suggest that in a great majority of libraries these two together represent adequate book provision for their communities we can only retort that they have a poor idea of what a library should be. We know some of these libraries at first hand—and we note that most of the libraries which borrow least are among the worst, with the poorest local resources, whereas those who borrow most (apart from the very large libraries) are those which have the best local stocks and most progressive outlook. We hope to give full credit to the value of inter-library co-operation; yet we suggest, most emphatically, that as an attempt to equalize borrowing opportunities for readers throughout the country it is a lamentable failure.

But why, we may be asked, do not those libraries which have poor local stocks make so much more use of co-operative facilities that they convert failure into success? There are several reasons: (a) where the libraries are bad those readers who want something better do not use them and do not know about the Regional Bureaux; (b) where the librarian is bad he does not bother to tell his readers; (c) where the staff are inadequate they cannot help readers to discover what they need; (d) similarly most libraries have little bibliographical information to guide either staff or borrowers; (e) borrowing at third or fourth hand is a very different thing from seeing books and choosing them for one's self; (f) readers cannot be educated in book use unless they have contact with good local stocks; (g) borrowing is expensive; if the borrower pays either all or part of the postage, reasonable use of the scheme would become expensive; if the library pays the cost and if it is a mean poor institution—as so many are—it tends to cut its costs; (h) there is much delay, some of it of course unavoidable.

Undoubtedly there will always be an important place in any future scheme for inter-library lending of genuinely specialized material and items difficult to obtain. As this is the avowed object of existing schemes we do not criticize them for not doing something they do not set out to achieve. We do affirm that such schemes cannot be in any way a substitute for local provision.

Nevertheless one may criticize the Regional Bureaux system on its own ground. Firstly, we can see little point in regional bureaux at all. The object of the bureau and its union catalogue (one has no catalogue; another has only a partial one) is to discover where a required book is available and ask that library to send it by post to wherever it is needed. Surely the task is a national one. Is there any virtue in going first to a *regional* bureau and then, if there is no copy in the region, passing on the request to the N.C.L.? Does this not, by adding one additional stage in the handling of every such application, waste time, energy and postage? Is there much saving in time in the post between places in the region and places outside? Does not the maintenance of the bureaux lead to duplication of catalogues? One will readily admit that when the schemes were started it may have been expedient for a National Central Library that was not receiving the necessary financial support to "farm out" some of its work. If that were so we do not criticize the past, but nevertheless maintain that it is no reason for perpetuating a policy which experience has proved to be mistaken, even if unavoidable.

Secondly, it is strange to find rank individualism creeping into co-operative projects; in other words, why have not the various regional bureaux adopted similar methods? They have not. Some union catalogues are on cards, some on slips. One circulates weekly lists; another does without a union catalogue and relies upon a system of four zones by which applications are passed from zone to zone before they eventually go to the N.C.L. Here we have embarked upon a major project, the whole idea of which was co-ordination of resources, yet the catalogues themselves cannot be co-ordinated!

Thirdly, the machinery is too slow. Here we need a sense of proportion. All books are not wanted in a desperate hurry; many are as useful next week as this. Moreover, even within a single system, if a book is "out" the reader must

reasonably expect to wait till it comes back. Nevertheless there is too much delay caused by the unnecessary and fruitless passing on of requests from place to place.

Fourthly, the schemes (with one exception) are far too costly in proportion to results. To discover the truth of this, study the balance sheets of the various components, add the costs of postages and of the time spent by non-bureau staff and you will find that, viewed nationally it would be much cheaper to *buy* every book handled than one *could* buy.

Fifthly, the union catalogues are far too comprehensive. They aim at including all non-fiction books, and a very large proportion of them ought never to be borrowed in this way—they should be available locally. Those who urge completeness have ingenious arguments to advance, such as the fact that quite ordinary books have a habit of disappearing after a few years. Hence, if the catalogues are to be kept up to date, millions of slips for books added and further millions for books discarded must be written and filed and recorded. Later we propose a simpler method (see Ch. XVI.).

Sixthly, the financial bases of the schemes are unsound. If the basis of payment were results—if authorities paid in proportion to the use they made of the scheme—it might be just, but it would inevitably tempt the backward authority to refrain from using the scheme so as to reduce its costs. As it is, in general those who use it least pay most. In other words, they subsidize the scheme, and why should they?

Lastly, the schemes have done little to promote better local stocks. On the contrary, they have often encouraged the backward libraries to refrain from buying things which they ought to buy and to rely unduly upon borrowing.

With the N.C.L. itself we shall deal briefly in Ch. XVI.

And so we see the net results of that co-operation upon which the 1927 Committee set such hopes. A few thousand people at most, up and down the country, use their tickets at libraries other than those provided by their own authorities; 70,000 to 80,000 books are lent to readers who would not otherwise have had them; the libraries themselves remain as varied and as unco-ordinated as ever they were, and in most areas the best kind of everyday library work still remains untouched.

## CHAPTER XIII

### SUMMARY OF THE PRESENT POSITION AND OF THE FACTORS PRODUCING IT

Incomplete though it may be, the preceding description of British librarianship as one man sees it will surely have shown that he is not satisfied with what he has seen. He has sound reasons for knowing that his dissatisfaction is shared by a majority of his colleagues, both the younger men and women who hope to make something better and the older folk who know too well the difficulties they have had to encounter and who ask that these be removed from the path of those who will follow. Thus, though as severely critical as circumstances seemed to justify, this report is essentially an attempt to indicate means of improvement. Therefore I have striven, as well as I know, not only to note what things were unsatisfactory, but *why*, hoping thus to find causes of which the recognition and removal are necessary for future development on better lines. Again I would pay my full tribute to achievement. Even if I have dealt chiefly with the dark side, there are many patches of colour and flashes of illumination. I wish I could have dwelt longer upon these, but had I done so I might have lost a proper sense of proportion. Nevertheless much has been done and much more attempted; I can only believe that those who have built good libraries in some places in our land will be the first to support any honest desire to have them everywhere, giving to all men the things that they have made accessible in their own towns and counties.

Those who have read the foregoing account will have gained cumulatively a picture comparable with that gained by the enriching and chastening task on which I have been privileged to engage. It is a picture of many elements and influences, of surprising contradictions, of innumerable disconcerting departures from the laws of averages and apparent cause and effect, of places where some things are good but others bad. With the conclusions deduced from the evidence each reader must disagree or agree according to his knowledge and opinions. All I can say is that I have described nothing I have not seen or made any statement of fact which is not based upon official statistics or information provided by librarians themselves.

Yet when it comes to passing a general judgment it is difficult to say in a few words what is the present state of the library service in this country. It is not satisfactory—but how unsatisfactory is it? The word “satisfactory” begs the question unless we try to define it. If, however, we turn to the first chapter in which we outline the purposes which the public library can and should perform, the answer is simple. Very few indeed are fulfilling these purposes reasonably well; many are barely attempting to do so.

What, then, are the main factors responsible for this state? Briefly they are six:

- (a) Unsuitable, unqualified and ineffective personnel.
- (b) Apathy on the part of the public due to the absence locally of opportunity to understand and appreciate the values of a good library service sufficient to make them seek it.
- (c) Failure of such public interest as does exist locally to make effective impact upon apathetic local authorities.
- (d) The limitations of local financial resources.
- (e) Limitations due to the insufficiency of the local unit of service in relation to population, etc.
- (f) The lack of co-ordination between the various local authorities responsible, and the duplications and omissions arising therefrom.

All these factors have been discussed as their manifestation and influence have arisen in the course of the preceding pages.

To summarize, however :

(a) It would be wrong to suggest that all inadequate libraries have inadequate librarians, because this would be untrue. Yet it can be said without hesitation that there is no good library in the country where a good librarian is not working or has not recently worked. Clearly this is the dominant element for success, without which none of the others can come into operation. For the future development of the service we must employ the right leadership.

Three things make the good librarian—his general personality and ability, his technical proficiency and his enthusiasm. Without minimizing the importance of technical education and experience, both of which can be acquired, the first element is the vital one ; the third inevitably arises from it. We would not say that the profession has paid too much attention to technique, but that it has paid too little to other qualities. Rewards have not been sufficient to attract a sufficient number of men and women of administrative ability, broad general sympathies and positive active personalities ; neither have conditions favoured the full use of those it did attract or enabled potential leaders to develop their abilities.

While technical qualifications are not alone enough, they are necessary and it is very disquieting to find that as many as 20 per cent of the libraries visited were in charge of unqualified people—and the word “unqualified” is not used here to indicate that they are not on a professional Register but that they have had neither professional education nor experience in a good library. These men and women were all in places with less than 70,000 population. With two exceptions, the libraries were definitely poor ; the exceptions proved the value of personality—and also how much more effective these exceptions could have been with better technical equipment. One is forced to the conclusion that no library, however small, can be efficient unless it is in charge of a competent qualified person, while, for the adequate development of systems serving large communities, men and women of outstanding ability are needed—people of at least the calibre of their fellow chief officers and of the higher administrative and executive ranks of private enterprise. We cannot have first-rate libraries with second-rate leaders.

Since it is natural to judge by results there is the grave danger that we may overlook the influence of the other factors not only upon the unsuccessful library but upon the unsuccessful librarian. I have sought to avoid this pitfall—by remembering that this is only one of six factors. I have not hesitated in my own mind to say (keeping the knowledge securely there) that X or Y or Z is not up to his or her job and that a better librarian would soon “change all that”. But I have often been compelled, in common justice, to feel that the fault was, to contradict dear Brutus, not in ourselves but in our stars—that the music hall proverb “you can’t keep a good man down” is a little too sweeping. There are, certainly in library work, limits to what a good man can do. An exceptionally good man, had he found himself in the conditions of which I am thinking, might have moved mountains ; more likely he would have moved himself. The ordinarily good man stops and tries to do what he may and he is not to be blamed if he gradually comes so to modify his aspirations as to fit them to the realities forced upon him. Consequently, many communities owe a great deal to men who have stayed to make the best of a bad bargain. As a result of this observation I am not unhopeful that when the occasion arises we shall have those willing to rise to it. The point of this disquisition is that ability is needed, but so is recognition of its importance and opportunity for its utilization.

What has been said about chief officers applies equally to all ranks. A chief librarian cannot make a good library by his own efforts. To do that needs a good staff. The successful man gathers one around him and gives it its own chance.

Elsewhere the limitation and frustration affect also all grades of library work. Every assistant, to the most junior, is equally deprived of scope, interest, experience and satisfaction if the system in which he is employed is not actively engaged in its full potential activities.

(b) Public interest quite patently and undeniably varies according to the quality of the service provided. This fact has created a vicious circle which librarians have often found it difficult to break. Contrary to the optimistic view of the 1927 Committee, the public will not normally ask for a better library service unless it already has a good one. The cynic may seize upon this remark, saying "if that is the case, if people do not miss the library and do not ask for it of their own accord, can it be so important?" There are two objections to this view—firstly, it denies the desirability of leadership in any field of human activity, and would, if the theory could be maintained, preclude any progress towards a wider, more generally accepted civilization since every good thing in society has at some time been the vision and the desire of a minority. The second objection is more immediate—the poor library is *not* an advertisement for a good one; only a good one can demonstrate the advantages and uses of the developed service. Bad libraries, instead of inducing dissatisfaction on a sufficient scale to provoke reform, only discredit the institution and compel the unsatisfied to resort to less adequate and more costly private sources of supply, if they are able to do so.

The war has provided an interesting commentary on this statement. Several counties and backward municipalities have been, if not compelled to improve, at least made cognisant of their deficiencies by evacuated readers who have been accustomed to good libraries in their home towns.

Public interest is, however, aroused by a good service. The history of all successful libraries will prove this statement.

(c) Nevertheless there are library authorities which must be judged more culpable than the people they are supposed to represent. It is their duty to lead, to consider all things which experience throughout the country is proving to be of communal benefit and to see that those things are given to their own community. If they had not failed in their duty in many places the burden of this report would be different. Why have they failed? Because they have had many responsibilities and, if some seemed more urgent and important than others, can we blame them for neglecting libraries if there was no one to lead them, no government department charged with keeping the need before them, no proper machinery for informing them about library progress elsewhere? Where there has been either a librarian of sufficient personality or a member of the council both informed and unremitting in his advocacy, the support of the local authority has often been effectively enlisted. But, unfortunately, backward authorities are those least likely to appoint outstanding personalities as their librarians, except by accident, or to heed the wiser voice in their midst. Being one fortunate enough to know how much the community can receive, often without gratitude or appreciation, from the unremitting and unselfish services of local councils alive to their great responsibilities, I would be the last to express any generalization derogatory to the work of local authorities. Yet the fact remains that, as things are, in some places the local authorities are the biggest hindrances in the way of local progress, not only where libraries are concerned. We are ready to admit that there are good and bad in all nations and sections of society; the same is, not unnaturally, true of local authorities. The bad may be exceptional; one hopes so. But no society can be content if the development of any service generally recognized as desirable can be perpetually frustrated by any body of men and women incapable of appreciating its value or jealous or fearful of the influences it may exercise.

(d) The effect of local poverty has already been considered (see Ch. XI). It is real and it is potent.

(e) The influence of the size of a unit of service upon the nature and extent

of the library service it can give has also been discussed throughout this report and will be considered further in the next part.

(f) The present local government system results in the provision of a large number of unco-ordinated units of service. Effective efforts to reduce the number of independent authorities which are too small to maintain adequate libraries would go far to raise standards and (in relation to results) reduce expenditure. But this will not in itself meet the whole problem—because some of the areas where the evils of lack of co-ordination are most noticeable are already large ones. What are these evils? Duplication of effort, the maintenance of barriers limiting the enjoyment by the public of such facilities as are provided, and neglect to provide services because one or all of the authorities concerned will not accept responsibility or is reluctant to make provision which can be shared by non-contributors.

Examples of duplication abound. Of the towns visited 22 accommodated 2 libraries (and in the country there are altogether 54 such cases)—the urban municipal library and the county library headquarters. Most of the counties have some collections, large or small, available either for those who call or for postal service; most have some reference and bibliographical material—though seldom enough; all maintain reserve stocks and the like. The urban library—possibly within a stone's throw—does much the same. Those who do not live in the town may use the county library; those who do may not. The better the two services, the greater the duplication of effort; when, as is usual, one is much better than the other, the more ironical the situation. If the two were to be amalgamated the people served by both authorities would benefit not only by increased facilities but by greater economy. There is duplication of effort also when two or several libraries provide the same books though one or two copies would serve both or all, when two or more maintain large reserve stocks substantially comprising the same material, when the libraries of small or medium sized places attempt to provide services and material which are available (but for the barriers of local authority areas) near at hand. There is duplication when, in adjoining areas, service points are provided with regard specially to the residents in each area—and neglect when inadequate service points are established in boundary areas because the populations on either side do not alone justify them, though jointly they would. There is duplication when two or more staffs spend time on technical processes which could be done by one, or when expert and specialized personnel are only partly employed in their true capacity independently by two or more authorities when they could serve both or all.

Barriers abound. Despite the increase in co-operation, far too many people in less good areas find themselves so near and yet so far where library facilities are concerned—people who live in badly served suburbs who cannot use the good libraries in the town where they shop, villagers who cannot visit the libraries in their market towns—and yes, townsfolk who wish they could go to county branches on their outskirts. Until there is absolute equality of standards and equitable financial contribution these barriers, absurd and indefensible, will remain—unless the boundary of the service unit is itself extended to embrace the whole natural service area. Finally, there are the sins of omission, the things which each authority does not do because for its own public alone it is not able economically to do it; for example, the counties which neglect reference and information work, the small towns which do not do even as much as they should for local purposes because they rely upon a stronger neighbour.

The outstanding impression of the library service gained throughout this survey is that it is badly organized.

This intermediate stage in the report—this pause between the present and the future—is an appropriate place at which to comment briefly upon the influence of the two bodies which have striven to improve and promote some sort of wider organization within the library service—the Library Association and the Carnegie



United Kingdom Trust. The former is by its Charter charged with the duty of promoting the better administration of libraries. The latter, because one of the chief interests of its founder was the establishment of public libraries, has devoted much of its resources and much of the interest of its personnel to improving existing libraries and widening the field of library activity. They have been dominant influences. The services rendered by each are too well known and too vital to require recapitulation. The Library Association has made librarianship a profession and by doing so has given to most communities the advantages that follow from professional service; it has, by innumerable activities, large and small, stimulated interest, fostered development, created the spirit of service, collected and distributed information and acted as a focus for all librarians and all library authorities who sought to do their work better than they could have done it alone. The C.U.K.T. initiated and has fostered the extension of library services to non-urban areas, it has asserted the need for inter-library co-operation and helped to make this possible by establishing the N.C.L. and the Regional Bureaux, it has shown its appreciation of the need for trained personnel by assisting the London University School, it has tried to stimulate better book provision by its extensive grants for book purchase; it has used its influence wherever it could, though that was only too seldom, to induce the small unit to become part of a larger one.

Both bodies have succeeded in that they have done much that they set out to do, and the world would be poorer had they not tried. Yet both have failed in that, in this report, one can find so much to condemn, so much to deplore.

Both have been disinterested; both have been progressive in mind, stubborn in purpose and secure in faith. Why have they not been more successful?

The answer is a simple one. In the terminology of modern politics—neither has been able to exercise "sanctions". The L.A. could only offer to its members the help, information and stimulus which they sought and from which they were ready and able to benefit. The C.U.K.T. could only offer assistance either to those who were ready to use it as a means of securing development or as a bribe to produce a more progressive attitude.

This phrase regarding the C.U.K.T. demands amplification—not only because it might be taken, wrongly, to infer criticism of the Trust's policy and the way it was implemented, but also because it has important implications regarding the future aspirations embodied in this report. I have made a detailed study of the grant activities of the Trust, both as regards the conditions upon which they were made and their ultimate effect upon the recipient libraries. I am concerned here chiefly with the series of grants to urban libraries for book-purchase; the grants to county libraries are another story and, if that story could not be told, neither could my long and critical account of county libraries have been written, for probably there would have been few county libraries about which to write. These grants were made primarily because the Trustees recognised—as I hope it is already clear that I myself reaffirm—that books are the essential element. Secondly, they were used as a means of inducing improvement in other essential respects. Speaking with a fairly thorough knowledge of the facts I would state at the outset that the Trust made every effort within its power to ensure that its grants would lead to a genuine and permanent improvement of the libraries receiving them. As a preliminary, a librarian of undoubted ability and experience rendered a full report on the state of the library concerned. In this he made whatever general recommendations he thought fit—and these referees were certainly not tolerant of inadequacies but they were fully alive to practicalities. After consideration of these reports the Trust offered its grants subject to the would-be recipients carrying out reforms regarded as essential by the referees—and none that I can find were either unreasonable or impracticable. If the authority agreed, the grant was allowed. If it did not—and I admire the way the Trust stuck to its guns—the grant was refused. And here are disclosed the two limitations of the

system. Some of the worst systems I have seen were those of authorities which refused to comply with the reasonable requests of the Trust; the "bribe" was not big enough—though heaven knows a big bribe indeed would have been needed to break down the narrow-minded complacent insularity of some of those who would rather die than give up their petty independence, or employ a qualified librarian, or reduce their newsroom by four square yards to improve the lending department, or add £5 to their paltry book vote. Secondly, the Trust could only exercise its influence for the period of the grant—usually 3 years; it could, for example, exact a promise that, during these three years expenditure would be maintained at an agreed level. Its only weapon was that if the authority did not, during this period, keep its promises, the rest of the grant could be withheld—and, more than once, it *was* withheld. It could not ask an authority to commit itself to maintaining improvement after this period; it could only hope that it would.

Therefore, when some of the recipient libraries were visited in this survey, it was especially interesting to note the effect of the grants after the passage of a few years. Of 26 such libraries, 7 are now definitely good of their class, 6 are moderately good, 7 are poor and 6 are bad. Take the bad 6 first:

A appears to have been an unsatisfactory authority from the first. It hedged and evaded the conditions; despite all efforts, two of them—open access and the provision of a card catalogue—have still not been carried out. Immediately the grant period expired, local expenditure was reduced to its pre-grant level, at which it still seems to remain.

B received the grant on condition that it went into the county. It was a case of out of the frying pan into the fire; it is still a wretched little place.

At C one of the conditions was that the librarian be paid a salary of £400; as soon as he retired the committee showed how they had profited by appointing a completely untrained man in his place.

It was at first suggested that D should go into the county but the county refused, expressing itself unable then to undertake the responsibility. Later the matter was revived. The main condition was that the book vote should be maintained at a given figure, which is now much exceeded—but the barrier to efficient working in the form of an untrained librarian still remains. A minor condition was that a telephone be installed; there is now a "switchboard" serving the whole building in the *Librarian's office*—such is progress!

Both E and F are very poor small townships where no sustained progress was economically practicable.

Of the "poor" libraries, G, no doubt stimulated by the grant, expanded its work and prestige sufficiently for it to gain new quarters, but it is now understaffed and under-financed.

At H the employment of temporary trained assistance was required in order to overhaul the very bad system. Undoubtedly the "temporary" did his work well, but only recently has a trained man been appointed permanently and meanwhile the stock has degenerated again.

I somehow seems to have evaded its obligations; at least, if it had carried out the chief conditions, things in those respects have since become as bad as they were when the original report was made.

The others are too small and too poor to exist effectively on their own resources.

What of the successes? One of the seven is a small town which was induced to merge its fortunes with those of a very good county; it now enjoys an excellent little branch and a good headquarters service. Of the remainder there is no need to particularize for the two essential elements are common to all: they are big enough to make good independent units judged by existing standards; at all of them there was a good librarian who used the grant as a stimulant to enable him to bring into being the first stage of his programme. The grants helped him

to break the vicious circle and to offer a demonstration of what can be done with moderate resources.

The morals are clear : (a) The Trust could not, by any grants, make a place capable of maintaining a good service if it was too small or too poor. It could help to make it temporarily a little less bad—that was all. Grants could not bring stimulus because there was nothing to stimulate. (b) Grants were relatively useless unless there was a fairly good librarian there ready and glad to seize his chance and exploit it. Grants were invariably ineffective where the person in charge was ineffective and unsuitable. (c) The grants were only temporary. The conditions upon which they were given were based upon the circumstances at the time. If there was an adverse change any improvement there might have been was quickly undone. If circumstances improved, then the conditions which might have been tempered to the shorn lamb set standards lower than the authorities might later have adopted. Looking back—and it is easy to criticize after the event—one would say that better average results would have followed larger grants for a longer period given to fewer authorities on condition that they employed acceptable librarians. But that would inevitably have left the backward libraries in a worse condition, actually and relatively, than now.

The truth is that no system of grants can be anything better than patchwork unless it is purposively directed towards the construction of a nationally co-ordinated system of libraries. And, since backward authorities may resent being co-ordinated, any scheme will fail which is not backed by a measure of compulsion.

## PART III

### PROPOSALS FOR THE FUTURE

#### CHAPTER XIV

#### A SUGGESTED ORGANIZATION FOR THE PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICE

We cannot pretend that the preceding chapters of this report present the whole case for fundamental changes and developments. Yet it is believed that sufficient has been presented to demonstrate both the shortcomings and the opportunities. Because the bias of the report has so far been critical it may have seemed to lay inadequate emphasis upon achievement. Nevertheless it should be appreciated that the proposals to be submitted are really born of the achievements rather than of the failures. Because there *are* good libraries, and only because of this, we can judge both how useful a good library can be and how much the community loses when there is no good library. We can also estimate the further values that will follow an improvement in even the best, and we can also see that these have been limited by conditions beyond their present control. Thus our object is to help the good to be still more effective and to prevent the bad remaining bad.

Before proceeding to outline our proposals let us remind ourselves of certain elements which are essential if the library service is to be developed satisfactorily.

(1) *There must be complete coverage throughout the kingdom.* Residents in all parts of the country must be adequately served from suitable points from which they may obtain, directly and indirectly, all those facilities which a good library service is capable of giving. The standard of service given at each point must be reasonably comparable throughout the country. There will always be places which are better than their neighbours and which show the way to more general future improvements. To this we cannot object since we do not desire that uniformity which would result in eventual stagnation and mediocrity. But we must insist that such variations are no more than will result from the healthy emulation of progressive elements, and that no reader shall be unduly prejudiced because of his place of residence or business. It must surely be generally accepted that everyone in this country, irrespective of local geography and irrespective of the wealth or poverty of himself or his local community, should have the right of access to a reasonable standard of library provision and all that a good library can contribute to a fuller, richer and more useful life. The present glaring disparities must be abolished.

It may be some years before standards in backward areas are raised to the present level of the best, but it is the first duty of librarianship to see that they are raised.

(2) *There must be a proper relationship between demand and supply.* Whatever the demands of the community may be, the library service must be organized and provided to meet them. Whatever the library may be able to do in stimulating the intellectual and social life of the community, it must be alive to its opportunities and eager to seize them. Both by its close attention day by day to the requirements of individual readers, and by a close study of the life of the people and of the nature of book supply, and by research and experiment in its own technique, the library must endeavour to discover and meet the need for books.

(3) *There must be a full appropriate supply of books at all stages in the projected network of libraries.* This has already been discussed in detail.

(4) *Libraries must be properly managed.* A good library service cannot exist where there are apathetic committees, incompetent chief officers or untrained ill-chosen staff. All library authorities must become aware of the true value of libraries. All governing bodies must be carefully chosen to include only those men and women who, having a proper appreciation of their great responsibilities, will seek to promote the well-being of the system under their control. Every chief librarian must be experienced, qualified, capable, impartial and keenly interested in his work. He must be supported by sufficient well-trained suitable assistants, whose conditions of service are satisfactory and whose work is properly organized so that each individual may make his or her maximum contribution to the service.

The proper staffing of libraries requires both the creation and utilization of personnel. We must be able to attract those who have the suitable educational background and personal qualities. We must give them the necessary professional training and full opportunities for securing wide and varied experience. We must provide for the continuation of their general education and the development of the specializations, appropriate to their tastes and abilities, which will provide the profession with a broad catholic appreciation of the needs of readers and enable them to be met, and which will prevent librarianship from becoming a narrow self-centred occupation. And, having secured this personnel, we must use it for the common good and not let it be wasted and its abilities become stultified.

We must have librarians who will regard the technicalities of their calling as a servant, not a master, and who will never allow them to obscure or dominate the fundamental objects of librarianship.

We must see that means are not given undue importance to the detriment of the ends they should enable us to meet. We must endeavour to secure as much uniformity of method as is consistent with efficiency. Though we would encourage all constructive experiment and thought, we must do away with that multiplicity and variety of method which at present frequently cause unnecessary confusion to staff and public, militate against co-operation and, since there is frequently only one best way, often indicate inefficiency.

(5) *The library services of the country must be properly co-ordinated.* This point is closely related to "Coverage", but it goes further. It may be possible for a variety of unco-ordinated authorities to give readers an adequate service, but it is seldom possible for them to do this *economically*. Things which are not truly economical are seldom practicable or desirable. At present our library services are all provided in relation to the needs of the individual library authorities. Each erects its premises, provides its stock and arranges its management with an eye only to the residents within, and the conditions appertaining to, its own area.

The result is much inappropriate misguided effort, much wasteful duplication and overlapping, and a vast amount of inadequacy. On all hands we find authorities attempting unsuccessfully to do things which they are incapable of doing alone, whereas they could well share the task with others. We find rigid barriers where there should be a full interavailability of facilities.

(6) *We need some form of national central body which will guide, co-ordinate and encourage the development of local services.* It will represent their interests in the national consideration of related fields of activity. We need this because co-ordination and co-operation must be planned on a basis wider than the outlook of the local authorities themselves. It may have to secure co-ordination and co-operation by concrete inducements, even by compulsion. We need it because we must pool our knowledge and our resources. We need it because there are many things which are pervasive and general to the whole field and which could be done better once, for the benefit of all, than many times over for the benefit of each individual authority. Up to now there has been no adequate central body with these functions. The library service is probably alone in being without

the province of any ministerial department of the central government. It has suffered thereby and not in prestige alone.

Much has been achieved in this direction by two bodies—the Library Association and the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust. But without minimizing their work, it is obvious that it has been limited because neither has been able to exercise any “sanctions”, and neither has enjoyed equality of status with any government department, though both have maintained close and valuable contacts in government circles.

(7) *Nevertheless the library service must remain a local service under the control and management of appropriate local bodies and not directly under the control of the central government.* This assertion is not made because of any desire to maintain a *status quo* or to preserve a tradition. Neither is it made from any fear that the library service could be misused by a national government, as an instrument for biased propaganda, as has been done in Nazi Germany, because, on the one hand it is unlikely that such a government would arise, but, on the other hand, if it did, it could and would effectively set aside any machinery that existed to prevent such misuse. The assertion is made simply because library service is, by its very nature, not only local but individual. In so far as the library needs of a community vary according to local conditions, industrial, economic, historical, social and otherwise—and they do so vary to a very considerable extent—it is necessary that provision should be related to those needs and it is obvious that those needs preclude any uniformity of provision save such basic uniformities of standards and methods as we have already discussed. It is manifest that the best library service for Hertfordshire would be different from the best for Hampstead, or Hamilton, and it is wise to believe that—again subject to general conditions—the local authorities responsible for these areas are the people best able to assess those needs and appreciate those differences. No central authority could possibly do so. But, even more important, the service is an individual one. There is neither any possibility of standardizing the service nor any need to attempt to do so. The Post Office *can* standardize because a stamp or a telegram is the same all over the country. The BBC *must* standardize, or rather compromise, because there are limits to the number of programmes it can transmit. But every reader is a law unto himself. The more he can remain so the better. The great thing is to establish and maintain contact with him. This contact is the responsibility of the individual assistant who serves the reader at every point down to the smallest, for it should seldom or never be necessary for the reader to make direct contact with the central administration or his elected representatives. But the more flexible the machinery, the more prompt it can be in action; the more it can anticipate the reader's needs rather than wait for them to be expressed, the better the service. Such flexibility and response should be easier to obtain under decentralization.

There is, however, another and cogent reason why we prefer local to national control. It is that under local control we shall have a number of authorities and not one. One authority could easily become stagnant and complacent. With many, we should always have that variety of endeavour which would stimulate progress and induce emulation. The theory that the achievements of one authority can effectively spur others to emulate them has already been discounted. Nevertheless, the picture we had to present would indeed be a sorry one if the active authorities had been trammelled and held back by any suggestion from a higher authority that “thus far shalt thou go and no farther” until others have done likewise. It is one thing to say that we cannot be content to wait for the unprogressive to see the unwisdom of their ways, and quite another to submit to government on the basis of any common denominator of achievement. We must fear “common denominators” like poison.

As libraries are so definitely a local service, local interest in them must be maintained and be capable of effective action. As a general rule people are

interested in affairs in proportion to the degree of control they can exercise over them; when this is slight, interest wanes because it cannot be translated into action. This is another important argument in favour of local control and is strengthened by its corollary—that, even were there considerable local interest under non-local control, the means of bringing proposals or objections to the notice of a national body would be so expensive of time, energy and even money that much of the interest would become sterile.

The library service draws its inspiration from the use that is made of it. We must never forget this. The people who, now or in future, want books and all they represent—they are the men and women who determine what the library service can and should do. There can be no question whatever of any opposite process in which any body, national or local, tells people what they should want and can have. Yet the more remote the control from the user, the more likely is this fundamental principle to be overlooked. This leads to the last of these essentials:

(8) *We must bring to bear upon all our considerations the widest possible vision.* Especially must we beware of favouring projects which, though possibly of apparent temporary expediency, may serve ultimately to restrict development. We may feel that we know today what we want to do tomorrow; we should be unwise if we were equally confident regarding the day following. Our task now is to achieve what is immediately attainable while at the same time seeking that our achievements will stimulate and prepare for higher attainment. We must not shut the door to the future. To this injunction there are two aspects—the negative proviso that we must not kill initiative or secure dead levels of uniformity, and the positive duty to set up, side by side with our immediate activities, machinery for research, experiment, thought and imagination which will prepare both the means and the ways of the present for the growing and changing task of the future. For we do know that our tasks will grow. The entire history of librarianship has shown that demand thrives upon supply. We are proposing now very materially to increase our supply. Therefore still further demands must follow—it is, indeed, in the national interest that they should. Moreover, there will be other much more potent influences at work—a spirit of reconstruction and a widespread demand for a better and fuller individual life for men of all creeds and classes. We are not now reaching a goal; we are merely passing the third or fourth milestone on a very long journey.

The immediate tasks consist of

(a) creating, as the area for each independent local library service, a suitable local unit sufficiently large to facilitate co-ordination and to ensure efficiency and economy\*;

(b) encouraging all areas, but especially those that are backward, to improve their services;

(c) removing, as far as possible, financial obstacles to their improvement;

(d) establishing a central library department to stimulate and co-ordinate local effort throughout the kingdom;

(e) providing proper facilities for training staff and inducements adequate to secure suitable personnel.

#### THE SUITABLE SERVICE UNIT

It is clear that very few of the existing units of library service are satisfactory. What *would* constitute a satisfactory unit?

(1) *It must embrace a normal natural congregation of people and be well related to their ways of living, their normal comings and goings, their interests and their occupations.*

\* By this we do not necessarily imply that the area for library service should or need be different from any such new area of local government as may be introduced after the war. To this point we must return, but at the outset we would assert that it would be a great advantage if general reforms were to produce areas suitable for library purposes as local government units administered by new authorities with general powers.

There is no one common pattern of community life. Practically every area in the country provides its own aspect, dictated by economic, geographical and historical factors and fostered by habit, by means of communication and by the association of interests. Nevertheless there is a basic framework. However remote, infrequent or indirect the contact may be, it can be said that human life everywhere is focused upon a large town. This town serves many of the needs of its own inhabitants, and in varying degrees, some, if less, of the needs of those who live, not necessarily in its immediate vicinity, but at least nearer to it, thinking in terms of communication and habit rather than in mileage, than to any other large town. There are undoubtedly many border-line areas; these do not vitiate the argument that the whole country can reasonably be oriented round a number of more or less large towns. Some of these towns may not be large if judged by the standards of other areas, but that again does not alter the fact.

Each large town has its suburbs, its satellite towns, its more thinly populated rural areas, its smaller sub-centres and their suburbs. The country can give things which the town cannot, and *vice versa*. This is no assessment of the virtues of town *versus* country. The wise individual seeks, if he is able, to enjoy the advantages of both. The fact remains that the large town, because it is a large town, can give services which cannot be obtained elsewhere and for which the individual is in the habit of going, and must go, to the town. This applies, in its degree, to the small town and the village. All types of area take their place in the hierarchy of community life. The countryman may—to take a homely example—be content to go to his wayside inn for his beer, his wife may get her everyday groceries from the village shops, if she wants a dress made she will go to the nearest small town, and if she wants something really special she will go to the large city. She can, within reason, have the services of the small and the large town brought to her by delivery but she loses thereby the facilities for and the pleasures of individual choice. This she may have to be content to forgo and, in so far as she knows exactly what she wants, she is not the loser thereby.

The same applies to a library service. The resident in the smallest place may find there a reasonable selection of ordinary books from which, if his tastes are not different from those of his neighbours, he may choose some that will give him pleasure and interest. If he has individual needs and knows what books he wants he can have these delivered. If he wants a wider selection he can go to the nearby town, even if small, and find there larger and more varied stocks from which to choose. If he needs to see, to compare or to work with a still wider range of material he must go to a town large enough to offer this facility. If he is engaged in specialized research he can only expect to find all his material in a really large city library, and he will have to go there.

The really important point is that he must not only have access to all these varied facilities but that he must have them as a legalized right.\* It is true that no matter where a man lives or to whom he pays rates he may, if he wishes and if he knows that he can do so, go to any reference library in the country. But if he does so the library authority providing that reference library is giving him service as an act of grace and to the provision of which he has not contributed. Equally he may, if he knows what he wants, often get it sent to him (at least in theory). But he has not necessarily access to those wider collections from which he can choose and in which he can gain his personal education in book use. Neither has he necessarily the services of the trained and expert staff that are or should be available at the larger centres of book provision. The present system may be satisfactory for those who do not particularly mind what they read and for those who know exactly what they want and where to get it and are able to do so—but it is far from adequate for the great majority of ordinary intelligent book users.

\* Conversely, it must be a legal obligation upon the library authority to provide them.



We have seen much—too much—of the present barriers. Apart from such inadequacies as he may have to suffer in his own service, we find the reader barred from using nearby libraries, even libraries in his own town, unless he pays special subscriptions, which, however small, are a denial of the freedom of library service.

The existence of comparable standards of provision in neighbouring areas of a similar type, with facilities for the interavailability of services, may often remove many of the disadvantages. But even if the individual is served, what is the price? It stands to reason that if this natural geographical community is served by several and not one authority there must be both a lack of co-ordination and duplication of effort which are wasteful and expensive. Who is to say where the function of one authority begins and that of another ends? Who is to decide whether a desired service point near the boundary of two authorities shall be provided by one or the other? Can we wonder if both or neither provide that distributing point? How can the book stocks of the whole of that natural area be built up and utilized to the best common advantage?

If, therefore, an area affords natural elements of unity, indicating that service to that area should be made as a whole, we must agree that service for that area should be made not by several authorities but by one comprehensive authority. Furthermore we must recognize the essential unity of such a community. The residents in the suburbs may work in the centre and travel to and fro every day—and *vice versa*; the children from the rural environs may go to school in the town. The prosperity of the town may depend upon the productive capacity of the surrounding area.

Does not this apply to many other aspects of local government as well as to libraries? Yes. Though we are here only concerned with libraries, it would certainly appear to an impartial observer that the best area for the library service should also prove the best area for most local government purposes.

(2) *The unit of library service must be large enough to comprise a sufficient number of people, desirous of using libraries, to justify the provision within and by that area of the full normal range of book supply and related services.*

(3) *The unit of library service must have sufficient funds at its disposal from its own local rates to provide a reasonable proportion of the cost of a service, adequate as regards book stocks, premises and staff for its own normal needs.* This statement rather begs the question of grants from national funds which must be discussed later. The point is simply this: that, though we may decide that such government grants are necessary, the locality must itself contribute a sufficient proportion to guarantee local interest and to justify such measure of local control as may be deemed desirable.

(4) *The unit of library service must be large enough to afford full useful occupation for the expert and specialized library personnel.* Or we may put this point in a reverse way by saying that no unit should be so small that it cannot afford to employ and make full use of the services of those qualified people whom we know to be necessary in any efficient service.

(5) *The unit of library service must not be too large.* It should not, for example, comprise more than one natural grouping of people around its large centre because to do so would be to destroy the values of the natural orientation and to create a unit which lacked the coherence which is its prime virtue.\* Secondly, if we choose too large a unit we shall lose the values arising from local control and the desirable intimate contact between the individual and his local conditions and the library that serves him. Thirdly, if we choose too large a unit we shall have too few units covering the country and will lose the advantages of variety, substituting for one national control merely a sub-national regional control which will possess only its disadvantages.

\* Provided the natural area is large enough. Size is of paramount importance. All units of library (or local government) service should fall between an accepted minimum and maximum.

### THE SERVICES TO BE GIVEN BY THE LIBRARY UNIT

There are certain types of library service which can only be afforded on an economical basis by a very large unit—a larger unit than exists anywhere at present. Of these the outstanding is the large reference library with its truly comprehensive stock and special collections, expertly staffed and organized not only for the use of the advanced specialists and research workers who can go there to work, but also as a clearing house for the advanced demands of libraries over a wide area. Such libraries already exist—e.g. at Glasgow, Birmingham and Manchester. They can and in fact do serve large areas of the country, though they draw no revenue from areas outside their official boundaries. These and others can not only be strengthened but their service to surrounding areas can be placed upon a proper basis which will greatly extend their sphere of influence. Of this more later. The immediate point is that we do not need many such services, regional in the wider sense of the word. We must not make the mistake of fixing the size of our library unit so large that it can include *all* types of service—this indeed is impossible as there are some *national* services. These wider provisions must be superimposed upon and related to the normal units which should not attempt to make them independently. Apart from such regional and national services, the normal unit should however be self-contained. It should be capable of meeting all but a very small proportion of the demands of its readers. Though they will inevitably vary in size, the units should none of them be relatively so ill-provided that the difference in standards of provision will seriously influence the nature or extent of the demands they will make upon regional and national units.

At present co-operation is vitiated by the fact, already observed, that since local resources vary enormously so do the potential calls upon other systems—some ask little that is provided locally elsewhere, others ask much. With adequate and comparable local units of service, calls for extra assistance would in all cases be limited almost entirely to things which *no* local unit normally provided.

Therefore each unit will be largely self-sufficient. It must provide adequate stocks available throughout all the ramifications of its system. The unit might be likened to a tree with its trunk, branches, stems, and leaves, all part of a whole, all enjoying the same living stream of renewal.

There should be in each a central direction and administration and a central book stock. At this focal point there should be the best reference department necessary for the needs of the area, a lending department at which a wide selection of material is available, and other appropriate departments. At the larger sub-focal points in the area there will be reference and lending departments, etc., appropriate to the needs of those who will use them more readily than or in preference to the centre. The same will apply to smaller places in descending degree until we reach the smallest of distributing points; beyond these there will be suitable travelling library, postal and other services. Provision at all these points will be consonant with the need at each; they will duplicate and overlap only so far as demands require. They will not compete with one another but will be complementary.

At each type of service point the reader will find certain things provided; others will be sent to him; others he will have to go elsewhere to use. What shall be at each will be determined by a careful and constant assessment of demand, by the due necessity for efficient economy in the service as a whole, and by various local circumstances. There can be no hard-and-fast rule. The number and size of these points will be different in every system. What matters is that every point within a unit will be part of an organized whole, in relation to which every element will be developed. Stock, staff and all facilities will be common to the whole. Stock and staff will be readily interchangeable. This organized service can, of course, be achieved by existing authorities—and is indeed achieved in some places, save that it is confined to the one authority's area. Unless the boundary includes the whole of the natural area the organization is truncated.

## THE CONSTITUTION AND GOVERNMENT OF THE UNIT

We are asking, therefore, for an area for library service which will not be the same as that of existing local authorities, save in exceptional cases. Is this a practicable ideal and, if so, how may it be achieved?

The whole fabric of local government is today being subjected to criticism by all those who, interested perhaps in fields quite different from those now under consideration, desire a more efficient, realistic machinery for the performance of increasingly important functions. The defects of the present system are too well appreciated to require consideration here—the multiplicity of units, their overlapping functions, their conflicting interests, the existence of far too many that are too small, the dangerous variations in wealth and efficiency, and so on. Most people agree that after the war steps will be taken to remove these defects. It is almost certain that these steps will include arrangements for amalgamation which will abolish the smaller authorities and consolidate the powers of the resulting larger bodies. There may perhaps be a general division of government between counties and county boroughs covering the whole country and having equality of status. This would be a relatively simple solution—though it is not my province to suggest that it would necessarily be the best.\*

Others are thinking in terms of “regionalization”, meaning thereby some sort of half-way house type of local government in which the national government decentralized some of its powers to a limited number of regional bodies who would in turn exercise some degree of control over the local authorities within each region. Those who advocate this system are perhaps unduly disposed to see a parallel between such a post-war scheme and the work of the Civil Defence Regional Commissioners, forgetting that this system is primarily a device for co-ordinating precautionary and remedial operations in wartime, a means by which the government departments provide liaison with local authorities, and machinery for the maintenance of government in the event of extreme emergency. A much clearer definition of the respective functions of regional and local authorities would be necessary if permanence were to be given to any regional organization. In any case it would be no more able than existing Ministries have been to overcome the difficulties inherent in local government as it is. Consequently, even with a regionalization some considerable reorganization in authority area and function would still be necessary. In so far as regionalization is authoritative, rather than advisory or co-ordinating, it would involve an extension of bureaucracy and a weakening of local democratic control which the nation might be very reluctant to accept.

Another factor which must be considered is how far this new local government organization will become a matter of compromise between the differing claims of various services for their own functional needs or how far the system of *ad hoc* authorities will be encouraged or discouraged. This has been one of the main contentions of local government history—whether it is better to have a number of authorities operating over an area and each responsible for its own functions, or whether it is better to have only one authority for an area and delegate to it all the functions necessary in that area. At present we have a compromise. The undoubted advantages of *area* government are that financial support is simplified, that the expenditure of an area can be better limited to its means (though whether this is wisdom or necessity we would not argue), and that it enables closer contact by the electorate. Nevertheless the system has broken down in many respects; some services have been given *ad hoc* authorities (generally representatives of the local authorities interested); some functions

\* It would certainly *not* be the best for the library service as it would inevitably prevent what we regard as an essential condition, i.e. that those who live in the smaller places should have the full use of library resources of such a character and extent that they can only be maintained in large towns. In our opinion it is vital that the country districts and the small towns should be closely linked up with the bigger urban elements; they cannot stand alone or united merely with one another.

have been allotted to the larger and wealthier authorities and taken away from the smaller and less capable. This consideration suggests the belief that salvation may be sought by removing altogether from out the sphere of local government certain functions which demand a large area of operation, and making these national, and by fitting all the remainder into the Procrustean beds of enlarged local authorities which will exercise all local powers within their areas. It is reasonable to assume that as the ideal functional areas of no two services will be precisely coterminous there will be compromise, in arriving at which the demands of the more powerful interests will have most influence.

Those who are concerned with the library service must therefore face these possible situations :

(a) There may be changes in local government which will introduce areas which, while not necessarily ideal, are practicable library areas.

(b) The new areas introduced may be unsatisfactory and unsuitable for library purposes.

(c) There may be no large-scale reform of local government areas in general, at any rate for some years. Despite the prevalent optimistic assumption that there will be immediate reforms, it must be remembered that there is a strong feeling on the part of many local authorities and officials that, though they are willing to give up some of their independence in wartime, they hope and intend to reassume it after the war. If reform of the library service is contingent upon overcoming the opposition of inertia, vested interests, traditions and prejudices, how much greater is the task when the larger interests of local government as a whole are involved ? Unless, therefore, we are prepared to wait indefinitely, or perhaps to find our claims pushed into a very secondary place in more general deliberations, we must ourselves formulate our requirements and devise a method for securing them which can, if accepted, be operated promptly and regardless of what may or may not be done in the general field, but which can, if and when the new schemes come into being, be incorporated if they are sufficiently hospitable.

The system which is described in the following pages is one which *could* be applied independently of other changes. It is described in detail, partly because thus we would make clear the *kind* of organization we believe to be necessary for the library service, partly because if general reforms are either lacking or prove unsuitable we may be compelled to seek this *ad hoc* system if we are to achieve our desires. Nevertheless we would insist that the best and simplest course is for us to lend our influence towards securing a general local government system for the future in which the unit of local government for all purposes will be something comparable with the proposed library unit. That is surely the ideal. *Ad hoc* authorities, joint committees, precepting and the like are, at best, means of achieving a purpose for which existing local authorities are not appropriate. Is there any inherent insurmountable obstacle preventing the creation of general local authorities which *will* be appropriate ? We therefore ask our readers to keep this ideal before them when studying what follows. Let them not, for example, criticize us for *advocating ad hoc* authorities and their contingent elements. We do not advocate an *ad hoc* library authority save as an alternative to be adopted if suitable general local authorities are *not* instituted.

Many possibilities have been considered and discarded. Let us keep before us clearly the primary needs. We require reform not only because existing areas are not suitable even with good progressive management, but also because there are far too many authorities which, apart from area problems, have failed through lack of interest or lack of ability to provide satisfactory libraries. It would be of some value to revise areas alone but even revision on the wholesale scale suggested above would only accomplish a part of what we seek. Local authorities have long enjoyed full powers to combine and co-operate but they have taken no genuine advantage of their powers. They have not wanted to do so; they have not been shown how advantageous it would be.

What we seek is a revision of library areas which will provide the layout in which progress and reform can best be applied. The unit is not an end but a means. This realization must help us to decide upon the best form of government.

As we have no right to presuppose satisfactory general revision of local government areas, the application of the scheme submitted is therefore in two stages, a brief period of powerful encouragement for reform on sound progressive lines followed, if necessary, by compulsion where action had not already been taken.

In the first stage an appropriate government department would make substantial grants to local authorities on condition that they fulfilled certain conditions, one of which certainly would be the organization of the library service into suitable units of library service. The appropriate department would determine the division of the whole country into suitable library areas (the boundaries being, necessarily, subject to consultation). The local authorities within each area would be told that if they agreed to combine their library services and administer them as a whole under a joint committee (and conform to other conditions), they will be entitled to grants. In order to prevent any recalcitrant authority or authorities from hindering development contrary to the wishes of its neighbours, the Appropriate Body should have power to make the operation of any unit scheme compulsory if the majority request it, or if, following an application from one or more authorities concerned, an enquiry discloses the desirability of such a scheme. Whether the scheme quickly found such acceptance that all authorities entered within a short period would depend upon the inducements offered and the success of the progressive schemes. If at the end of, say, five years all but a few authorities had subscribed to the scheme there would be a clear case for making its application nation-wide by compulsory methods. If there were then many non-participating authorities it would be evident that modifications in the light of experience were necessary.

It is essential to adopt a scheme of division for the whole country as a preliminary step. Otherwise there would be grave risk that the first units to be formed might choose boundaries which militated against the proper development of the remaining areas. No haphazard process of "pull devil, pull baker" will produce a balanced national system. At the end of the next chapter we give a list of units, showing how each is constituted. The Appropriate Body should insist that all amalgamations conform with this, or a similar, scheme, providing however that applications to vary it may be made but would only be granted after an enquiry had been held at which representatives of neighbouring units or parts of units would be heard. The units, once formed, need not be permanent and unchangeable. There must be machinery for the adjustment of boundaries when changes in the incidence of population or other causes make this desirable.

There are those who advocate immediate and complete compulsion. The present writer does not support their ideas. Compulsion is contrary to the spirit of our national government and though in some instances it is applied, it is agreed that this is a last resort, to be adopted only when the public interest compels. We do not want to force authorities to provide good libraries; we want to make it possible for them to do so, by helping them to set up the appropriate machinery and giving them the necessary financial assistance, encouragement, information and co-ordinating services.

Reform must, moreover, be to some extent gradual. This does not mean that we should wait for it or face a protracted delay. Apart from any other consideration, we must seek to set our house in order as quickly as possible so that we may be able to play a proper part in the vital and difficult task of national reconstruction—and we cannot afford to wait until we find ourselves again in the clutches of a depression period if it should prove beyond the wisdom of our economists to avoid one.

It should be quite practicable to establish our desired schemes all over the country within five years ; within ten years they should have reached the stage when the progressive will be in achievement far ahead of our present ideals.

But everything cannot be done at once. There must be time for the preparation of schemes for reorganization, for the selection and appointment of the chief officers and for the interim training of personnel.

This programme is based upon recognition of the national predilection for development by easy natural stages. In fairness to those who advocate more rapid progress it must be noted that when the war is over the circumstances and spirit of the country may well be such as to favour and require immediate and drastic reforms. If this should prove to be the case all that would be necessary would be the passing of an Act establishing what is herein referred to as the "Appropriate Body" and providing that one year after it becomes law the powers and duties, properties, rights and liabilities of all existing library authorities will be transferred to the new unit library authorities (to be described later). The new authorities would be specified in a schedule to the Act (as in the list now submitted) but any local authority would have the right to appeal within six months for inclusion in a different unit. The Appropriate Body would hear all interested parties and give the final and binding decision. Within nine months, but preferably earlier, the Committees of the new Authorities should be obliged to appoint their chief officers. We shall shortly discuss the nature of the Appropriate Body, but if this is to be part of a new Ministry it would seem probable that this more rapid form of reorganization would prove the more acceptable.

The basis of relationship between the Appropriate Body and the unit authority should be the "scheme" system. Each of the units will consist of previously independent authorities in varying stages of development and efficiency. Some units will as a whole comprise relatively backward areas, others will consist of the best elements in present-day librarianship. The first tasks of one unit will not be the same as those of another—and first things must come first.

The initial duty of the unit after its construction has been agreed and its chief officer appointed will be the preparation of a fully detailed scheme showing what it proposes to do within, say, each of the coming three years, with an estimate of the cost of carrying it through. If approved by the Appropriate Body it will become an agreed scheme binding upon both the authority and the Appropriate Body.

The extent of control to be exercised by the Appropriate Body must be clearly defined. There must be no attempt on its part to nationalize the library service, or to dictate to any local authority regarding the details of administration, or to exercise any control over such matters as book selection.

Its duties are clearly limited by its share in the financing of the unit. That is to say, it makes a grant to the authority—at the request of that authority—on condition that the authority does certain things which it has proposed to do of its own free will if the Appropriate Body gives the grant to make them possible. This does not mean that grants should be based upon the undertaking of specific projects ; on the contrary, we are recommending block grants based in general upon local expenditure. The point is that the local authority might say : "Relying upon our own resources we would have done so and so ; now that we have the benefit of this block grant we are prepared to do this and that." The Appropriate Body, giving the grant with full knowledge and approval of the authority's proposals, would be concerned only to see that they were in effect carried out. How this would be done is discussed later. This is not only a reasonable proposition ; it is a necessary safeguard, as public money is involved.

The scheme would formulate such matters as the number and qualifications of staff to be employed, the amount to be expended on books, binding and the other main items of the budget, the number and nature of service points, the methods of distribution, etc., and include proposals for the erection and

maintenance of new premises, and the reorganization and refitting or the closing of existing ones.

Apart from the approval of schemes there are only two other general matters which the Appropriate Body should dictate. In the first place, since it is manifest that a good service demands properly selected and appropriate staffing and since it is certain that the right personnel cannot be obtained unless they are offered proper rewards and inducements, the Appropriate Body will surely insist upon the payment of agreed national scales of salaries by all grant-earning authorities. Secondly, as the success of the new units will depend largely upon the personality and abilities of the officers placed in charge of each, the Appropriate Body, while not dictating the appointment of any individual, should have the duty of approving all chief appointments. To this important matter we shall return later but it may be stated categorically at this stage that though it would not always follow that the existing chief officer of the principal element incorporated in the new unit would be appointed its chief, he would frequently be the obvious choice. Nevertheless our proposals provide clear and definite clauses that no one shall be prejudiced financially; on the contrary, if the proposals did not lead to individual and general improvement in status and salary they would fail in a most important respect.

#### THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE UNIT

As we are, for the purposes of discussion, assuming that the unit will be the voluntary amalgamation of a greater or smaller number of library areas, or parts of areas, at present independent, the obvious governing body is a joint committee consisting of representatives of the local authorities concerned. Subject to certain provisions this is both practicable and a course for which there are many satisfactory precedents. In this way a close and constant contact can be maintained with the local electorates; discussion, at meetings of the local councils, of reports submitted by their representatives will afford opportunity for local interest to be maintained and local opinions expressed. Furthermore, as it is natural and usual for local authorities to choose, as their representatives on joint bodies, men and women who are specially interested in and qualified for the work, the personnel should be of a type more appropriate than may always be found in a purely local committee. The joint committee would be a valuable means of inspiring a wider public spirit and of breaking down barriers; this in itself should be of influence beyond the immediate sphere of the joint committee.

The provisos are these:

- (a) That all authorities shall be represented.
- (b) That the representatives shall be able and willing to play a part in the scheme as a whole and not regard their functions as parochial.
- (c) For this reason all powers under the Libraries Acts should be delegated to the joint committee. Achievement would be seriously restricted if the representatives were merely delegates authorized only to carry out their instructions and obliged to seek authority for or confirmation of their actions.
- (d) This delegation of powers to the joint committee must include the power to apply for the authority's contribution to the joint fund. This is not unreasonable because, when the initial schemes are under consideration, all local authorities will be made aware of the expenditure to which, in general terms, they are committed. Moreover, at any rate during the first years, it is possible that local authorities will not be required to raise more from local rates than they do now, though they will enjoy immeasurably greater benefits.
- (e) The constitution of a joint committee must be such that it does not effect a virtual taking over of the smaller authorities into a larger scheme controlled by the one largest authority. It may well be that the new unit comprises one authority which embraces a majority of the population; without proper safeguards this authority could easily usurp the privileges of the others. This must and can

be avoided by a suitable clause in the constitution providing that no one authority shall have a majority thereon. There may, of course, be cases where such a proviso would be unjust to the large authority but this contingency could be met perhaps by consent, and partly perhaps by co-optation. As a general principle, joint committees should include a proportion of representatives of other bodies interested in culture—such for example as local universities or important non-public libraries within the area. This would foster that co-operation between public and non-public libraries which is so desirable.

Subject to adjustments necessary to afford the last-named safeguard, the joint committee may well be constituted on a population basis. For example, each component authority might send one representative regardless of size plus an additional representative for every 40,000 of population.

In some units this may produce a large committee. In such cases an executive committee can be appointed to carry out the duties of management.

### THE FINANCING OF THE UNIT

As there are already a few local authorities which are providing, entirely from local rates, quite satisfactory library services and which will probably be willing and able to develop them still further, it may be asked why it is thought necessary to seek grants from national funds. Why should not other authorities do likewise? The question is one which must be answered.

The first part of the answer is that so many have *not* done so. We have already considered the reasons—financial inability, lack of appreciation of the worth of the service, unsuitability of area, absence of the driving inspiration of suitable personnel. The second part of the answer, however, is that a good public library is as much a national asset as a good public health service or a good educational system. It is, in fact, an extension of the latter since it makes available the material which is necessary if people are to be able in after-school life to utilize the techniques of learning that they have acquired in school—where they can acquire little more. Without it expenditure upon education may become relatively unproductive. The State has an obligation to see that the material for a full intellectual life shall be universally available. Up to now it has farmed out its responsibilities. Perhaps because it has recognized the local aspects of the library service it has neglected its national values, and failed to appreciate that wherever the local authority was neglecting its duty it was not only the local community that suffered but also the whole State, since the health and well-being of the whole consists of that of its component members. The fact that a just measure of local control and a necessary relationship of nation-wide services to local conditions can be combined with some degree of national responsibility has already been demonstrated in the case of the services we have just cited. That a similar basis is justifiable and desirable for the library service is our basic argument for grants.

Nevertheless, the first part of the answer suggests how the grant system should operate—as a compensation for poor standards of local wealth, as an inducement to better service, as a means of forging better service areas and as an advocate of better personnel.

Each of these points has its own implications. As regards poverty—it has already been demonstrated that there are authorities which cannot be expected to provide for library service as much per head as others—because the rate product per head is comparatively low. In such areas there is an obvious case for assistance. A district should not be compelled to bear the cross of its own poverty. We have the strongest possible case for asking for government assistance for such areas. Do we then suggest that grants should be based upon local inability to spend? The idea has its attractions until we realize that if a poor area is unable to provide good libraries it is equally unable to provide all other local services of a satisfactory character. The Board of Education recognizes this when approving grants for elementary education and makes provision, to a limited extent, to



compensate for local inability to pay. There are other tentative efforts to equalize the burden. They are, however, only palliatives. The effective solution will be found in a thorough scheme either of rate equalization or of national rating, together with a genuine standardization in systems of valuation and assessment. These are problems beyond the scope of this report. When they are answered the need for grants for library purposes based on local poverty would disappear. Until then is it wise to introduce yet another form of temporization? We think not. This view is strengthened by two further considerations—firstly, that the relative position of local authorities is partly real because it arises from genuine local poverty, partly fictitious when it is due to different methods of assessment; this being so it would be difficult to arrive at a system of differential grants which would be genuinely fair. Secondly, as poverty has made the poor districts relatively backward (with certain exceptions) it is probable that, since improvement must be gradual, the operation of a flat grant system would be adequate to meet the situation until such time as the inevitable general reforms are secured.

For this reason—and also very strongly because any other system would penalize and discourage those authorities which have already been alive to their responsibilities—we are in favour of a grant which is based upon local expenditure.

But because we want the grants to act as a stimulus to backward authorities we must take steps to ensure that no authority can use the grants as an excuse for reducing its local expenditure to such a point that with grant-aid its service remains no better than it was without it. The "scheme" system will of course to a large extent prevent this if it is effectively applied; but it is an inherent part of the proposals that there should be progress and the increase in expenditure necessary to ensure it.

Lastly it is recognized that the co-ordination of the new units will involve expenditure, at first, on the programme of reorganization and, later, on maintaining services capable of meeting the greater demands that will arise. Also, as the personnel are at present manifestly paid less than will be necessary to attract and retain staff of the right quality, salary bills will surely be higher. Grants must, therefore, be sufficiently generous to meet increased costs and to afford inducements.

It is therefore suggested that the scale of government grants should be that at present applying to the most nearly appropriate service—higher education\*—that is to say, a grant equivalent to 50 per cent of total authorized expenditure. There should, however, be the proviso that this grant shall not reduce an authority's expenditure from local funds below 75 per cent of its expenditure during a "standard year" (which should be 1938-9).

This means that (assuming grants are available under the scheme system) if any authority raises from local funds 75 per cent of its expenditure during the standard year it is able to receive in grants an equivalent amount, making its total expenditure 150 per cent of that of the standard year. If it does not desire or it is not necessary or expedient to spend as much as 150 per cent of the standard year's expenditure, grants could be made of whatever sum is needed additional to 75 per cent and up to 150 per cent. E.g. if 120 per cent is needed the local authorities would contribute 75 per cent and the grant 45 per cent. In such cases the expenditure from grants would not, of course, equal local expenditure. If, as would be extremely unlikely, the local authority does not expend 75 per cent of the standard year's expenditure, no grant at all would be forthcoming.

If, on the other hand, a local authority is so keen on development that it maintains its standard year rates—and if circumstances justify the expenditure—the total amount available will be 200 per cent of the standard year's expenditure.

\* This assumes the continuance of the present system of education grants. If it were changed—block general "weighted Exchequer grants" being increased proportionately as a substitute—then we should seek the same system for libraries and ask for the same safeguards for the maintenance of efficiency.

However, though inflation has so far been evaded, since we must face the possibility of a serious variation in the value of the pound, we must stipulate that the expenditure of the standard year shall be adjusted in accordance with the purchasing power of the pound sterling then prevailing according to official computation.

The standard year expenditure of the new unit will necessarily be the aggregate expenditure of the areas incorporated therein (or, if part only of any area is incorporated in one unit, of a proportion, based upon population, of its total expenditure). This may prove disadvantageous to the more progressive units because, as their gross expenditure per head was higher, a given expenditure may with them be only part grant-earning, whereas in a less developed unit an equivalent *per capita* expenditure may earn full grant, but it is difficult to see how this can be avoided. In any case a higher ratio of grant is clearly more necessary in the backward areas with more leeway to make up.

We must still determine how, when the total budget for the unit is decided—and when it is known how much, allowing for the grant due, must be raised locally—its local incidence shall be determined. The rateable value per head for the authorities will, unless there are drastic reforms, still remain as varied as local conditions and the absence of equalization projects determine. We have three alternatives: (a) to divide the total expenditure by the total population served, arrive at a *per capita* figure of expenditure and ask each authority to raise a rate sufficient to provide that amount, (b) to levy a rate throughout the unit which will, in total, produce the required amount, or (c) give the unit power to “precept”.

The first method would in reality aggravate the situation arising from local “inability” as the component with the lowest rateable value per head would have to raise the highest rate. Thus it is unfair and impracticable and must be dismissed. For the second method it can at least be said that the contribution required from each constituent authority is based upon its ability to contribute and that the more fortunate are helping the less. But there are two objections. Firstly, it would be a most complicated system to apply. Secondly, it would ignore the fact that, at least in the early years, the service afforded by the unit would not be precisely equal throughout the unit. For example, it may be some time before a component is given the premises necessary for a full service and meanwhile it would be paying the same rate as components which were well served.

We feel, therefore, that the precepting system is undoubtedly the best. For this there are precedents—e.g. the Catchment Boards. Under the precepting system the unit, having determined its total budget, decides what actual sum it shall ask each component to contribute. This sum will be fixed having regard to all germane factors—population, rateable value, services to be enjoyed, and the like. The system is at once the simplest and the fairest. Any component can of course appeal, if it wishes, to the Appropriate Body.

#### THE OPERATION OF THE UNIT

Let us consider the various stages involved in the formation and operation of a library unit.

(1) The Appropriate Body having formulated the general conditions upon which grants will be made, local authorities within a proposed unit area are asked to consider the proposals.

(2) When the authority or authorities comprising a majority of the population concerned decide in favour of forming a unit, the Appropriate Body shall serve notice upon any authorities in the new area which have not yet agreed, informing them that the scheme will come into operation on a given date and that they will be compulsorily included therein. They will have the right to appeal to an appropriate tribunal set up for this purpose. There might be good grounds for objection on the part of an authority—e.g. it might feel that it should form part

of another unit, or it may in special respects wish for assurances that the schemes will safeguard its own peculiar interests. Everything reasonable must be done to hear and meet the legitimate requests of all authorities involved, though any attempt to obstruct a scheme which will be for the general benefit of the unit area must be resisted. Consequently if any authority (or authorities), even if it does not comprise a majority of the population concerned, makes application to the Appropriate Body claiming that a unit scheme would be beneficial to the area as a whole, the Appropriate Body shall hold an enquiry and if its decision is in favour of a scheme it shall follow the procedure indicated above.

(3) A joint authorities' committee (perhaps on a temporary basis pending the adoption of a permanent constitution) of representatives should be appointed and meet. There should also be formed a joint committee of the chief librarians of the existing library authorities who would elect representatives to sit with and advise the joint authorities' committee.

An officer of the Appropriate Body should attend initial meetings of these committees to explain the proposals and answer questions raised.

(4) The joint authorities' committee may if it thinks fit (and provided the resolution to this effect is agreed by a clear two-thirds of the *authorities* concerned) nominate as chief librarian of the unit one of the chief officers then in the employ of one of the associated authorities (this officer to be paid a salary approved by the Appropriate Body). If this nominee is acceptable to the Appropriate Body he should be appointed and take over his duties forthwith. If he is not acceptable (or if the joint authorities' committee does not wish to make a nomination) the position shall be thrown open by public advertisement, when the joint authorities' committee shall make a selection of names in order of their preference. The Appropriate Body shall normally approve the appointment of one of these. All later appointments (after the initial appointment for a unit) shall be after public advertisement.

(5) The Chief Librarian thus appointed shall act as the Chief Executive Officer of the Joint Authorities' Committee to which only shall he be responsible.

To facilitate the smooth operation of the unification process, however, as this will need close knowledge of the conditions pertaining in each previously independent area, the Chief Librarians of all previously independent library services in the unit area shall form a Consultative Committee. The primary function of this Consultative Committee shall be to assist the Chief Librarian of the unit but it shall have the right to submit memoranda for the direct consideration of the Joint Authorities' Committee if it thinks fit. Such Consultative Committees should cease to function at the end of the first year following the adoption of a unit scheme.

(6) The Joint Authorities' Committee shall consider schemes for the unification of the unit service.

*Inter alia* these schemes must include proposals (which must be submitted for the approval of the Appropriate Body within a stipulated period) for the allocation and grading of all existing staff. The grading scheme shall provide that, irrespective of the duties he may be called upon to perform, no member of the existing permanent staff shall be paid less than he would be receiving in his then capacity as a servant of a previously independent authority and that he shall receive no less increments than those to which he was previously entitled.

Furthermore no permanent member of the staff of any authority shall be discharged excepting on such grounds as would have been considered just and reasonable had he still been the employee of his previous authority, e.g. dishonesty, gross incompetence, etc.

Pending the adoption of the new grading scheme every existing member of the staff shall continue to receive the rate of pay and any automatic increments to which he was previously entitled.

(7) The Joint Authorities' Committee shall submit three-year schemes (within a given period) together with revised estimates for the current year, and provisional estimates for the two successive years. Until such schemes are approved, each authority shall provide to the common fund the unexpended balance of the current year's estimates. Pending the approval of the schemes and estimates the Appropriate Body may, however, if necessary, make an interim grant to the unit to enable it to carry out its duties.

(8) Each local authority shall take such action as is necessary to transfer to the Joint Committee all its properties, assets, powers and liabilities as a library authority. (The new Libraries Act must make this possible and provide clauses to facilitate the transfer, and must also give the Joint Committee the statutory right to own property and incur liabilities within the scope of the Act.)

(9) Schemes shall provide *inter alia* (a) for the revision and co-ordination of all book stocks within the unit ;

(b) that all residents, students and employees within the unit area shall have full use of all the services provided within the area, with interavailability of tickets, and steps should be taken to make residents aware of these facilities.

The course of development in each unit will necessarily be different, according, for example, to the degree of uniformity of standards and methods already existing. Progress must be gradual, and the first steps will as a rule be directed to strengthening backward districts and building up a unified system. Care must be taken not to interfere with the public service during this period of reorganization. Generally speaking we must provide for additional staff, at first to enable the reorganization to take place, and later to maintain the further services which will then be available. This is itself one cogent reason why reform should be embarked upon as soon as possible after the war and before the considerable body of temporary staff, which has gained useful experience, is dissipated. Most of those temporary assistants who have proved suitable, and who have the necessary educational background, will be capable of absorption into the post-war systems. Arrangements must therefore be made for their professional education.

#### THE WORK OF THE APPROPRIATE BODY

In the next section we shall discuss the nature of the Appropriate Body. First let us consider further its functions, of which we have already seen something.

The Appropriate Body will be a Government department charged with responsibility to Parliament for the promotion and maintenance of a nation-wide, but on the whole (i.e. apart from certain "national" services—see later) locally governed, library service.

Its duties will be

(a) to assist local authorities in carrying out their duties as library authorities by providing advice and information ;

(b) to collect information, conduct enquiries and issue reports on the general progress of librarianship and on special aspects thereof ;

(c) to consider schemes for the development of such co-ordinated systems of local library provision as seem most likely to promote the interests of library users, and to make grants to local authorities for this purpose ;

(d) to maintain the necessary machinery, including inspection, to ensure that such grants are properly and usefully expended and to investigate and consider all proposals in connection with which it is suggested that such grants should be made ;

(e) to formulate certain minimum standards of library service, especially in relation to book supply, the availability of the service and the qualifications and salaries of persons employed in library work ; to promote the adoption of such standards and to regard the attainment of such standards as an essential element in the giving of grants ;

(f) to examine and approve plans of projected library buildings and to sanction loans for their erection and for such other purposes as may be authorized ;

(g) to consider and promote such services as are appropriate not to the individual library unit but to libraries and other institutions and organizations capable of serving either larger regions or the nation as a whole, such being regional reference libraries, the National Central Library and projects for national cataloguing and bibliography.

To conduct its many and important duties the Appropriate Body must employ a staff adequate, competent and of such a nature as will enjoy the confidence of local authorities and of the library profession. It should comprise two elements : (a) men experienced in the work of national government, i.e. civil servants of ability and interests appropriate for this work, and (b) men experienced in the administration of public library services. Of the two principal officers of the Appropriate Body one should be a professional public librarian and the other a senior civil servant. These would be assisted by deputies and the necessary secretariat and financial and legal officers. To carry out the "field work" of consultation with local authorities, investigation, examination of "schemes" and such inspection as is necessary to see that these are implemented, there should be some four to six Regional (or Divisional) Officers, acting under the Principals. These Regional Officers must all be men with considerable experience of public library work, gained during their previous employment as chief officers of progressive library authorities. This is regarded as essential ; no other persons, whatever their personal abilities, could hope to secure the confidence of the profession.

#### THE NATURE OF THE APPROPRIATE BODY

The success of these proposals will surely depend largely upon the understanding and enthusiasm of the Appropriate Body and of the extent to which it is acceptable to local authorities and to the library profession. We may safely assume the first ; the second point, though to some degree intangible, is of very real importance. The public library movement has enjoyed independence from its outset. It has—with all its shortcomings—preserved its integrity and individuality. There has been hardly any government control ; authorities have retained a purely local outlook only slightly modified by regional schemes ; alliances with other local activities, such as museums and art galleries, have been, on the whole, local and not general ; the subordination, in whatever degree, of county libraries to education has not proved an altogether happy state. Libraries may have suffered from their aloofness. The fact remains that they have been, and will want to remain, a separate and distinct element. Indeed this is right and proper, since the nature of library provision is such that it can operate best as a firmly established service with its own peculiar functions which, though related to the functions of most other local activities, are a part of none. We must, therefore, not only accept but welcome and promote this independence.

For this reason when we come to consider what government department should become the Appropriate Body for libraries we find a powerful and justifiable body of opinion firmly opposed to any control which may subordinate librarianship to any other interests and so limit its sphere or destroy its true values. Any proposal for an Appropriate Body must, if it is to be either sound or acceptable, offer full safeguards that the integrity of librarianship will be unassailed.

Nevertheless can we seriously suggest that a new Ministry of Libraries can be appointed solely for this purpose ? The libraries of the whole country represent a very important element in our national life ; the grants we envisage will amount to a considerable total. There is ample work for a Ministry. This is granted, but is Parliament likely to be willing to create such a Ministry ? If it did would not its functions, important though they may be, nevertheless become

so much less in apparent influence than those of other Ministries that the Ministry of Libraries would soon come to occupy a subordinate position and so carry the resultant disadvantages? These objections may be unfounded. Undoubtedly we would wish that they were, for we should surely regard a Ministry of Libraries as the simplest and most acceptable solution. So we must consider the alternatives, which are three—that library matters should come within the scope of (a) the Joint Advisory Board suggested a few years ago, (b) a new Ministry to be created with new functions in which libraries would be included, or (c) the Board of Education.

When, at the Margate Conference of 1936, the Library Association expressed the opinion that there should be some form of government grant for special purposes and for the assistance of impoverished areas, the appointment of a Joint Advisory Board was recommended. This Board, which would comprise representatives of the associations of local authorities, the library profession and similar interested parties, was to function much on the lines of the University Grants Committee, its grants being made from a direct Treasury allocation. For the more limited purposes then under consideration it is probable that this would have proved reasonable and adequate machinery. We cannot feel that it would meet satisfactorily the wider and more permanent requirements of the present proposals. It is indeed doubtful whether the government would delegate such important powers to a non-government body. Neither would the J.A.B. enjoy a standing comparable with that of a full government department.

The second suggestion is more attractive. This nation has so far existed without a government department responsible for the many activities which may be embraced in a wide interpretation of the words "fine arts"—music, drama, graphic and plastic art, museums, architecture, the recreational arts, the BBC, and so on. Certain aspects have been watched over by the Board of Education, the Ministry of Health, the Treasury and other departments, but this oversight has been neither comprehensive nor completely satisfactory.

Conditions after the war will probably emphasize the need for such a new Ministry. It has been long apparent that without government support and encouragement many of the most valuable elements in the cultural life of the nation are in danger. Even if we recognize the contribution to general well-being of the patronage system which before the war has helped the arts, even if we agree that this system is desirable, it is not likely that it can be operated effectively after the war, and it is doubtful if it will be consonant with the post-war spirit.

Here, it is believed, is the alliance we should seek. Libraries are by no means absorbed in "culture" in the limited sense of the word, but they are more nearly related to the work of such a Ministry than to that of any at present existing. Moreover, as we should be allied to a new Ministry, with its machinery and scope as yet to be defined, there should be no grounds for fear that libraries would either be subordinated to other functions or limited by traditions and ideals appropriate to other duties. In addition, it is clear that if all those concerned with libraries were to express their desire to be placed within the sphere of such a Ministry, we should be adding a powerful argument for its establishment. Library matters would of course come within the purview of a special libraries department of the Ministry.

In my opinion we shall, therefore, serve our interests best if we investigate the possibilities of such a Ministry being established and if we accordingly make contact and collaborate with those who also desire it.

Failing the creation of a new Ministry is there any sound reason why the Government should not be asked to establish a Libraries Department of the Board of Education? Although the Board is chiefly concerned with the education of children and young people, its efforts in the field of adult education have been fruitful and progressive. The library has a different task from that of the educationist in that, on the one hand, it covers a much wider field and, on the

other, it is concerned largely with the *individual* reader whereas most educational activities operate by means of classes and courses. Nevertheless both educationist and librarian are serving the same type of human need—both are fostering the use of the individual intelligence as an element in social, civic, economic and personal development. Essentially it is the duty of the educationist to instil the method and implant the desire, and the purpose of the librarian to provide the material and continue the work of the educationist into everyday life and post-school periods. They have two complementary parts of the same task to perform.

Any reluctance there may be to seeking a closer alliance must be grounded upon fear that librarianship may become subordinated to formal education and fear that sufficient heed would not be paid to the views of the professional librarian and the library authority. Undoubtedly if there is any alliance we want to be full partners, completely responsible for our own sphere while maintaining friendly co-operation with our colleagues.

Unless the legitimate claims of librarianship for full freedom of independent development—and especially for the complete local independence of library committees—are properly appreciated and preserved, alliance with the Board of Education could well prove stultifying and retrograde. Have we, however, any reason to suppose that these claims would not be recognized? Is not such an assumption both unreasonable and unjust? Library affairs could be conducted by a distinct department of the Board set up for that purpose, contacts with existing departments being only such as to bring library work within the general framework of the Board, which would gain added responsibilities and prestige and would in turn give to libraries the benefit of its experience and powers.

On the whole, therefore, though we prefer, for reasons stated, that libraries should come within the purview of a Libraries Department of a new Ministry of Fine Arts and Libraries (or some such title) we are happy to believe that a Libraries Department of the Board of Education would provide most effective machinery for the development we so much desire.

It must be abundantly clear to all who have read thus far that I am most definitely convinced that librarianship must retain its independence and identity. I have met no one who disagrees with me. It is a cardinal point. We must maintain that attitude. Nevertheless I appeal to all, when considering this vital question of the nature of the Appropriate Body, to remember that this is no mere simple choice between accepting an alliance—with either the Board of Education or a new Ministry—or staying as we are. The choice we must make is whether we will give or deny librarianship its future. Such being the situation, we cannot allow any form of prejudice to influence our decision.

## THE UNIT SYSTEM DESCRIBED

Since it is so important that readers of this report should have a clear idea of what is meant by the proposed library unit system, a more detailed picture, even if it involves some repetition, may be forgiven.

There are many different kinds of library, large and small and serving different types of population and varying purposes. The idea of the unit system is to take all those which are serving a natural area and first, while doing nothing to destroy their legitimate individuality, to weld them into one co-ordinated whole and then to develop their scope, and perhaps increase their number, so that they may give the public the best possible library service. Each unit will conform to the essential conditions already considered, i.e. it will be a big enough system to be efficient and economical, it will serve a large enough population to justify a full general service as regards stock and staff and it will have sufficient resources for this to be possible.

Let us consider these units further, both externally (as regards their composition) and internally (as regards the kinds of service points they will embrace).

We have so divided the country that it falls, completely, within 93 library units. These will, if the scheme is adopted, take the place of the 604 existing library services. The number, determined only by the process of discovering the best natural areas,\* is sufficiently large to maintain variety, as well as to give adequate local control and contacts. Only three boundaries (the Welsh and Scottish borders and the boundaries of the County of London) have been regarded as sacrosanct because of the administrative difficulties that would arise if we sought to depart from them. Elsewhere, so as to reduce complications to a minimum, we have respected existing boundaries where there was no very good reason to do otherwise. Thus the simplest units consist of a geographical county and all the towns and country within it. There are many districts, especially those of a rural character, where it is not seriously material to which of two or more units they belong, and in such instances the county boundary has been maintained. We must remember, throughout this description, that we assume complete interavailability throughout the entire country and hope for reasonable parity. Thus, the village or small town resident being free to go where he likes, these border lines are not of great significance. Elsewhere, however, it has been essential to overcome the hindrances imposed by more or less artificial boundaries. For example, take a natural area, pivoting from a main town and spreading, maybe, along a wide valley, through which the roads and railways run so as to knit together the places served. If this area happens to pass over from one county to another, then we have not hesitated to ignore the old administrative barriers. Even here, however, we have with few exceptions been able, more or less well, to retain existing internal areas such as rural or urban districts. We have, in brief, done as little amputation as possible, though much was necessary.

Some of the units still serve a population smaller than we would regard as an ideal number, but we could not make them bigger without introducing artificial

\* In the preliminary stages we found a small number of good natural units which, when we came to calculate their requirements for minimum staffing and adequate service generally, were found to be too small and had to be amalgamated with others. Such cases were Herefordshire, North-West Wales, Westmorland and Dumfries-Wigtown-Kirkcudbright.



relationships. Conversely, some of the units are larger than we would wish. We have indeed felt compelled to break down a few larger, densely populated areas which otherwise would have been too large and unwieldy. Here we may have had to sacrifice some of the theoretical virtues of the ideal whole natural area but nevertheless the resultant units have as much affinity, as parts of the wider area, as it has been possible to secure.

The aim has been to base each unit upon a single large town. Sometimes this has not been possible as no large town existed in the workable area; in such a case the best appropriate service must be built up on the smaller town selected as pivot. Occasionally we have been obliged to unite two or three large towns because the only alternative would have been to split a district into elements each too small to be satisfactory.

Some of the units in the thickly populated areas are almost, if not wholly, urban in character. Generally, however, we have succeeded in bringing within each unit a section of the differing types—rural, small town, suburban and urban. This follows a deliberate policy dictated by several powerful reasons—above all to increase the resources available to the less populous areas by direct association with the towns, to create areas dependent not upon one type of economic condition or outlook but upon the interplay of several, and to secure variety of service and experience.

We do not pretend that all our proposals result in ideal units—because circumstances do not enable such ideal units to be found. Broadly speaking there are six main types of unit.

(1) The rural area, probably fairly extensive, with no large town but one or more centres in small or medium-small towns, one of which is chosen as the best place for headquarters, generally on the grounds of communications.

(2) The large town with its surrounding region which may embrace other medium-sized and small towns within fairly extensive rural tracts.

(3) The predominantly industrial region, comprising one large town but also several smaller neighbouring towns and townships and having some rural hinterland, though probably this is not extensive.

(4) The large provincial city which is surrounded by other large and medium-sized towns which for considerations of size one is compelled to form into other units. In such cases, very few in number, the main city is given only such additional areas as are indivisible from it.

(5) The large suburban areas, radiating from the big city, thickly populated at the centre and gradually thinning out and ranged along a main communication artery—such as the “wedge” units surrounding London.

(6) The units into which Central London is itself divided.

When planning these units we sought to view the field afresh, disregarding both existing boundaries and the state of development of present local libraries. Thus no heed has been paid to extraneous factors—e.g. no library has been chosen as the pivotal, headquarters, element in a unit because it appeared a good library; neither have we tried to avoid making it a headquarters library because it was not good. Indeed there will be not a few cases where the main elements are, as regards standard of efficiency, inferior to some of the other elements—but clearly this is a matter which time can and must put right.

Passing to the “internal” aspects of the unit, obviously every one is different from all others, and will embrace libraries of different types, number and standards, but nevertheless there is a general pattern.

Before continuing let us remember that there will be, apart from the units, a few larger regional reference libraries each of which will cater for the requirements of specialist users within the area covered by several units—indeed by users from all over the country. These will give services over and above those of the unit system—but more about them later. They will all, of course, also be the main libraries of their own units.

In every unit there will be (a) a *Headquarters* administrative and distributing depot which will generally be at the same place,\* even if not in the same premises, as (b) the *Main Central Library*. This will contain large lending and reference departments capable of meeting not only all the less general requirements of readers throughout the unit but also the needs of such of the readers of the town itself as are not satisfactorily served by local branches. It will, in fact, be a *central* library in the present sense of the word excepting that it will be the central library for the much wider unit population. Here also will be such other appropriate departments as special libraries, reading rooms, central children's library, etc. (c) *Town branches* will be maintained as now, save that they will not merely be branches of the central but branches of the unit, i.e. drawing their stocks and staff from the general pool. (d) In any large town within the unit there will be a similar *Central Library*, capable of meeting, with the assistance of those town branches of the unit which are in the district, all the ordinary requirements of the inhabitants of the town. This, again, will function much as a present urban central library but with this essential difference—it will have behind it the larger resources of the unit and in particular of the unit Main Library. Thus it can rely upon these for many services which at present it has to attempt itself; this will enable it to do yet better those things which are genuinely necessary for the district immediately served. For purposes of this account we will refer to these central libraries of towns other than the main town of the unit as “Central Libraries”.†

There will often, as now, be Town Branches in these larger towns within the unit and these again will not be branches of that town, but branches of the unit.

Usually the local pattern is simple, as when the main town is a distinct centre for the wider unit area. In several congested areas (such as the London districts) the situation is not so obvious. Each of several contiguous independent authorities has erected its own central library and branches in relation solely to its own boundaries. Thus we shall find cases where existing branches can serve more people than now, whereas others may be redundant, and elsewhere new branches will be needed. Similarly we cannot assume that all central libraries will prove to be in the best position in relation to the new units. Probably all will continue to have a comparable amount of work to handle but, owing to the growth of the district since they were first built and the fresh factors arising from amalgamation, there will surely often be new and more appropriate strategic points at which future central libraries will best be placed.

Indeed, we must throughout forget the present associations of names and think of the *types* of library required for a new co-ordinated service. Thus, just as the so-called “central libraries” of the present small towns may well fall into perspective as District Branches, so it is not what a “central” library has been called but what it will now be required to *do* that governs our use of the term.

(e) In each smaller town we shall need a library adequate to meet both the requirements of its own district (excepting any which are satisfactorily met from local branches, if any) and many of the less general demands of those who reside within reasonable reach. Such towns will be of varying sizes and so therefore will be their libraries, though not necessarily in proportion, as we must take into

\* There may be cases where the existing central library, while sufficient for its purposes as central library, may not be adequate to meet the added requirements of the unit organization—e.g. for offices, store rooms, distribution departments, etc. In such cases it may well be better and more economical—indeed, if the library is in a congested area, it may be obligatory—to have the headquarters elsewhere, perhaps on a cheaper site in a convenient suburb. We must remember that the advantages of having modern adequate premises may far outweigh any disadvantages arising from separation and if proper use is made of facilities for communication these need not be formidable. The drawbacks of distance have today been almost annihilated by such devices as private lines, loud speakers, teleprinters and messenger services, and of these aids we must make full use.

† These terms are only for purposes of discussion. In actuality, of course, they will be referred to by the name of the place served—e.g. Blankchester Central Library, Fulford Central Library, etc.

consideration the amount of demand from the environs. Except in the smaller places these may conveniently be called *District Branches*.

(f) Central Libraries and District Branches may or may not be used as *Area Libraries*. By an "Area Library" we mean one which will serve branches and centres within its area with stock, possibly staff, etc., and will generally supervise and co-ordinate the library service within its sub-area, which will be a part of the whole unit area. This will normally be the case where geographical and transport factors make it more economical to administer these branches from places other than Unit Headquarters. Thus in the closely-knit, thickly populated units there will be no need for such decentralization, whereas in widespread rural units it will be essential. We have already considered the functions and advantages of the Regional Branches already existing in some counties. We would like to adopt the term "regional library" but this would cause confusion owing to the present, quite different, use of the words.

(g) Throughout the unit area there will be a number of *Branches*, in all suitable, reasonably compact places, with populations of from two to three thousand people upwards. Some of these will operate under Area Libraries, some will be administered direct from Unit Headquarters. Some, especially in thinly populated parts, will act as Area Branches from which centres and smaller Branches are stocked, staffed and supervised (as is the case with existing county Regional Branches).

(h) All smaller places will be served by *Centres* and—as already urged—these should be closely linked up with larger elements so as to ensure adequate stock and staffing and the proper co-ordination of the whole system.

(i) Other rural residents will be served by *Travelling Libraries* operating from suitable Area Libraries. These travelling libraries will also look after the exchange of books for centres, small branches, etc.

(j) *Postal and delivery services*, to cater for the needs of individuals unable readily to visit the larger libraries, will also be organized.

To complete the picture we envisage the development of specialization usually by the larger libraries, and the development of large Regional Reference Libraries.

How will this system serve the individual reader? Let us take a typical unit, setting out some of its components.

#### A TYPICAL LIBRARY UNIT DESCRIBED

The unit taken as an example is a large but well-defined and indivisible area with a total population of about 800,000.

##### I. *The Elements making the Unit are at present :*

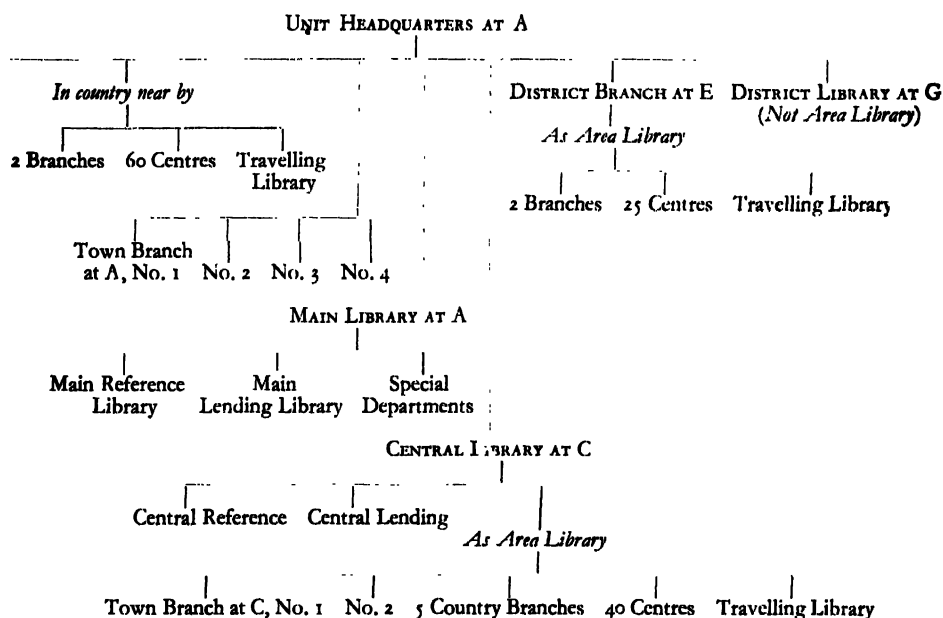
- A. A County Borough, pop. 150,000, with 4 branches.
- B. A County Borough, pop. 47,000.
- C. A Municipal Borough, pop. 65,000, with 2 branches.
- D. A Municipal Borough, pop. 33,000.
- E. A Municipal Borough, pop. 17,000.
- F. An Urban District, pop. 26,000.
- G. An Urban District, pop. 21,000.
- H. A whole county library system with headquarters at A and serving all rural districts and also some 14 small towns (some in Urban Districts, some in Rural Districts), total pop. 440,000.
- I. A small part of another county system, consisting of one Rural District, pop. 12,000.

##### II. *The New Lay-out will be :*

- a. Headquarters at A.
- b. Main Library at A.
- c. Town Branches in A and C.
- d. Central Libraries at B and C.

- e. District Branches at D, E, F and G.  
 f. Of these B, C, D and E will act also as Area Libraries, as also will one of the places at present in the county area—to which we will refer as K. Each of these will serve as Area Library for about one-sixth of the total area. The rest of the rural area will be served from the headquarters.

### III. *The Plan of part of the Unit :*



IV. *The Lay-out as affecting the Reader.* Our first reader lives in a suburb of town C, near one of the town branches. He can get his novels and general non-fiction from this branch. He is, however, a manufacturer often in need of information regarding his business—for which he goes, telephones or sends to the Reference Library at C. If this library cannot supply the information it gets in touch (if the matter is urgent by phone) with the Main Special Technical Department or Main Reference Library. Alternatively he could himself go to A if this were convenient or justifiable. Moreover, if A could not supply the information, A would get in touch either with a Regional Reference Library or with an appropriate special department in another town.

He is also interested in the technical and commercial aspects of his work about which he will read sometimes widely, sometimes in relation to some special matter. There are some books of interest sent to his branch from time to time—these he sees in the ordinary way. More frequently he uses the Central Library at C, where there is a wider selection. When he cannot find what he requires, however, he will consult the bibliographies available and seek the help of the experienced staff, and the necessary material will be obtained either from the Main Library or Headquarters or (by HQ) through the N.C.L. or a specializing library.

Our second reader lives in a small town served by a Branch. He is a general reader but also is specially interested in English literature. Most of the books he needs are available in the branch, the stock of which is frequently refreshed, but for the less “popular” classics and some of the plays, poems and even novels

of today which are not of general appeal he must ask the assistant, who will have them sent. She will apply first to her Area Library, which, if necessary, will forward the application to Headquarters. The books when available can either be posted direct to the reader or delivered at his branch. Sometimes he wants a specific piece of information; if the branch assistant cannot give it from the limited reference collection available, she will send the request direct to Headquarters, or alternatively if the circumstances are appropriate she can telephone her Area Library.

The third reader is a school teacher living near a village centre. From the small but good and frequently changed centre stock she can get most of her everyday reading, but frequently she requires books to help her in her work and books to aid her in her studies for an external degree. She therefore sends her requests by post to Headquarters. Once every two or three weeks, however, she goes into the nearest market town where there is a branch and she uses this opportunity to keep in touch with a wider selection of books; and occasionally she goes to the large town where she is able to meet a member of the staff, with whom to discuss any special requirements and difficulties; there also she can look up the current lists of new books, and explore the central library collections, and note any items she will later requisition.

The fourth reader is a farmer living in a lonely place. The travelling van visits him every month. From the excellent selection available he chooses as many items as will last him the month. He also has his own particular interests; for example, he proposes to do some repairs to farm buildings and wants to know more about bricklaying and concrete. If he writes to his Area Library a few days in advance the van can bring him a selection of books from which to choose. Even so there might be more urgent needs for a special book or for information, in which case he can write to Headquarters and the book or information will be sent.

The functions of the Main Library and the Headquarters must be carefully related, so as to avoid duplication. For example, as there will be a large representative stock at the Main Library, it will probably be best if all special demands and requests for information are dealt with at the Main Library so that in dealing with them the ordinary stock can be utilized. Stocks at the Headquarters will thus be principally those for the supply and exchange of general books to branches and centres, sets of books for adult classes, drama clubs, school libraries and so on.

The stock at the Main Library and Central Libraries will be on the whole static, that at the District Branches and other large branches partly static, partly exchanged, that elsewhere completely changed at frequent intervals. A union catalogue showing the actual location of non-fiction will be maintained at the Main Library.

#### THE STAFFING OF THE UNIT

Next let us consider the unit lay-out as it affects staffing. This we must approach from two angles—the grading of the units themselves and the grading of the elements within the units.

The staff of a unit will consist of (a) Headquarters staff, i.e. those whose work concerns the unit *as a whole* and (b) the staff of service points within the unit, be these Main Libraries or Branches or any other.

To consider first the Headquarters staff. Certain general principles are disclosed. Firstly, the Chief Librarian of the Unit must be regarded and regard himself as the officer in charge of the whole system. Even if (as will often be the case at first) the new Unit Chief was originally the Chief of the main element while it was still independent, he must now forget his former allegiances. There must be no mere question of expanding the centre to embrace the wider unit or a badly balanced service will result with over-concentration on the centre and

neglect of the outskirts. His loyalty must be to the unit as a whole; and if he is to develop it fully he will have plenty to occupy his energies without being tied to the main library or to any other elements in his new territory. Thus there will be need for a new Librarian of the Main Library, working under his direction.

Secondly—as has already been hinted—all branches within the unit (large town, small town or country), will become branches of the unit and will not remain branches of the component towns. The reasons for this are important. If each Central Library continued to manage its local town branches we should tend to perpetuate a local spirit conflicting with the interests of the unit as a whole, and intangible but potent internal barriers would be perpetuated. Moreover the full interchange of stock and personnel would be hampered, lack of uniformity of standards would arise, and there would be a likelihood of conflict of opinion and division of responsibility as between Town Librarians and Superintendents of Branches.

This does not imply that where there is Regionalization, i.e. the use of Area Libraries responsible under unit direction for the servicing of parts of the unit area, branches would not be linked up with Town Libraries and supervised by Town Librarians, but in such cases the area covered would always be larger than that of the original independent town and would embrace not only town branches but country branches, small district branches and probably centres. In such cases the evils noted above would not arise, and in his capacity as Area Librarian the Town Librarian would be performing delegated headquarters functions.

Thirdly, the Main Reference Library should act as the Unit Reference Library, because obviously all reference library problems arising within the unit can best be handled at the place where there is the strongest reference collection and the most expert staff. Otherwise duplication and inefficiency would arise. Consequently the Reference Librarian at the Main Library would be virtually a member of the Headquarters Staff (though acting under the immediate aegis of the Town Librarian of the Main Library, both for disciplinary reasons and because they share the same premises and duties towards local users). Similarly it will generally, if not invariably, be best for the Assistant in charge of Special Requests to work at the Main Library as there he will have access to the largest specialized stocks and it will be from the Main Library that reserve stocks will be co-ordinated.

In addition to the Unit Chief there will be certain senior officers concerned with the unit as a whole:

- (i) The Unit Deputy.
- (ii) The Superintendent of Branches and District Libraries.
- (iii) The Head of the Accessions Department—responsible (with the assistance of all Town Librarians, special librarians, reference librarians, etc.) for book selection and accessioning.
- (iv) The Librarian of the Main Reference Library acting also as Unit Reference Librarian.
- (v) The Unit Children's Librarian responsible for the selection of children's books and directing and supervising work with children, schools, etc., throughout the unit.
- (vi) The Assistant in charge of Special Activities—e.g. books for adult classes, drama clubs, boys' clubs, etc.
- (vii) The Secretary and Accountant—a fully qualified officer responsible for all those financial duties carried out by Borough and County Treasurers, but which will now become a direct obligation of the unit; he will also be responsible for general secretarial work and be able to give some advice in legal and business matters.

Each of these will have under him or her certain senior assistants, who may or may not, according to the size of the unit, be above the basic grades (see later):

- (a) *Under the Superintendent of Branches:*
  - (i) A Chief Assistant.

- (ii) A Transport Officer, responsible *inter alia* for the maintenance of vehicles and their staffing and use, for arrangements for rail and other transport, etc.
- (b) *Under the Head of the Accessions Department :*
  - (i) A Chief Cataloguer and his senior assistants.
  - (ii) An Assistant in charge of Special Requests responsible for dealing with all requests, from readers in the unit, for books not in stock at their service points, and for arranging for them to be sent, if available, or obtained by purchase, inter-library loan, etc.
- (c) *Under the Librarian of the Main Reference Library :*
  - (i) Assistants in charge of special collections.
- (d) *Under the Secretary and Accountant :*
  - (i) Senior Clerical and Financial Assistants.
  - (ii) A Superintendent of Buildings.
  - (iii) A Stores Officer.

The above is a general basis. In the small units some of these duties may be united (e.g. Deputy and Superintendent of Branches, Head of Accessions Department and Chief Cataloguer) and more of their assistants will be on general grades. In the larger units some departments will be strengthened by additional and more senior personnel (e.g. at Regional Reference Libraries there will be need for more senior assistants and for thoroughly expert specialists).

These Headquarters officers can be graded according to the types of unit in which they serve—partly because the larger the unit the greater their responsibilities, partly because by having different scales appropriate to the types of unit we shall provide a stimulus to ambition and opportunity for individual betterment.

So far the situation is fairly straightforward. Difficulties arise, however, when we pass to a consideration of the grading of staff in the component elements. As before stated we shall have Main Libraries, Central Libraries, District Branches and Branches of varying sizes within the unit. How can we fix appropriate salaries for these? On the one hand we cannot go by any rule of thumb method such as the population served, for who can say what population is served by any single element in a co-ordinated unit? On the other hand how far can existing salaries guide us?—since even if these were reasonably standardized and adequate, which they are not, the responsibilities of the Librarian of a Central Library incorporated in a unit will not be the same as they were when that library was independent and responsible also for its local branches. Against this, however, we must remember that the new organization should promote considerable development and thus the duties of the Librarian of a Central Library, for example, if not the same, may well be no less responsible and make no less demands upon his abilities and energies. On the whole, therefore, there is ample justification for seeking rewards for these previously independent librarians no less good, indeed better, than the good practice of existing conditions. It is of course clearly understood that no individual will be prejudiced; he must continue to receive his present rate of salary and increments whatever may be the scale rate of his new duties under the unit system. Yet, when fixing scales, we must consider not only the present but the immediate future, including the many fresh appointments which will arise at once as a result of reorganization. These scale rates, therefore, have been fixed (in accordance with the general policy of this report) not on a basis of things as they are but things as they should be. In general these scales will not be found prejudicial. Even more important, the new lay-out will afford many favourable opportunities which will be grasped by all progressive and ambitious librarians. We are assuming that many chiefs of present independent towns will find better scope either as unit librarians elsewhere or in the more appropriate senior posts within their own or other units. This will apply not only to present chief librarians but to all ranks.

In the salaries scheme given in a later chapter the Main and Central Libraries and District Branches are divided into categories which must be taken as indications rather than permanent fixed quantities. The basis of division is the present accepted provision in well-developed library areas. Thus Grade C (approximately 35,000-50,000) means that those men are to receive the grade salary who are in charge of Central Libraries, or District Branch Libraries, which are of approximately the same size and character as those which would normally now be provided in a good independent library serving a population of between 35,000 and 50,000. We do not pretend that this is more than a rough and ready basis but it is sufficient to indicate appropriate grading during the initial stages of the unit system and undoubtedly it will not be long before, as we gain experience of the operation of the unit system, we can devise closer and more appropriate definitions. To these basic grades will be added increases for those librarians with additional responsibilities or a wider field of operations, i.e. those in charge of Main Libraries and Area Libraries and Regional Branches.

In the grading of Branch Librarians we have adopted the basis of total branch staff as this is a reasonable indication of the amount of work done and of the responsibility carried by the officer in charge.

Finally, when grading the various units themselves into the five types, we have taken into consideration a combination of factors—the population served, the predominant type of service, the number and size of component elements, the likely development of specialization, the financial possibilities of the unit authority and so on. Again this is only intended as an initial grading. There is no reason why in years to come as a result of experience—and to provide for the extent to which some units develop—there should not be some “upgrading”. As we have worked on the principle of choosing a low rather than a high grading, so as to facilitate the adoption of the system, there is not likely to be much, if any, “downgrading”.

#### THE COST OF THE UNIT SERVICE

What will it cost to provide the unit service and staffing? This is a most important question, as clearly it is useless to advocate any system which is financially impracticable. When we notice the very small average amount at present expended upon books and the prevalence of low salaries we must ask whether it is indeed possible to provide a really efficient co-ordinated service and employ the necessary personnel at a cost which will remain “reasonable”.

To demonstrate the financial aspects of our proposals let us take another specimen unit. This comprises a medium-sized county and the towns within its geographical boundary. So that readers may not be tempted to indulge in speculation as to which county it really is, we have altered its shape a little and introduced one element from without. Otherwise all the facts stated regarding this unit—the number and size of the various constituents, their present staff, expenditure, etc.—are real.

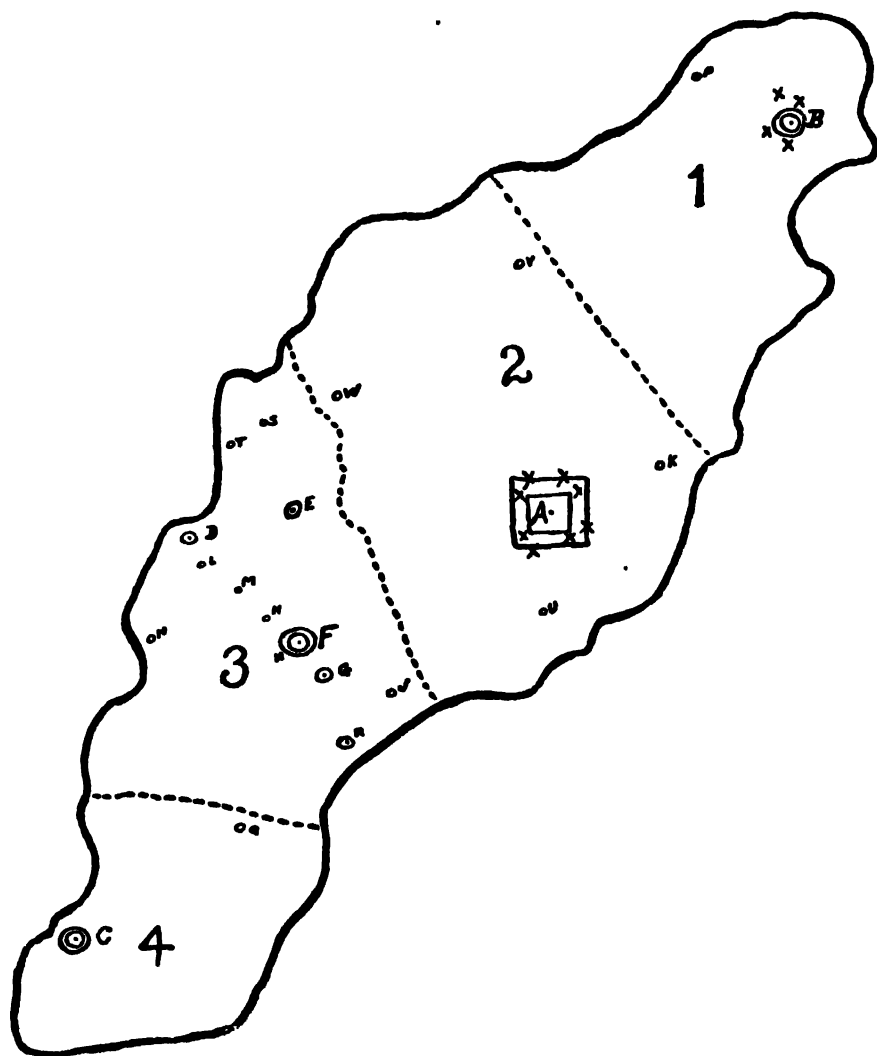
So that it may also be typical we have chosen a “unit” which is neither better nor worse than the average. The present county itself now spends much less than the county average; by way of compensation, the largest town is one which spends slightly above the urban average; the other constituents are on the whole below the average.

The constituents are as follows:

- |    |            |          |                          |
|----|------------|----------|--------------------------|
| A. | Population | 260,000, | with 8 branches.         |
| B. | „          | 97,000,  | with 4 branches.         |
| C. | „          | 47,000,  | with no branches.        |
| D. | „          | 15,000,  | „ „ „                    |
| E. | „          | 26,000,  | with 1 branch.           |
| F. | „          | 34,000,  | with 1 part-time branch. |
| G. | „          | 4,500    |                          |



The above are at present independent library authorities. The rest of the unit is served by County Library Z and includes 13 small towns (H, J, K, L, M, N, P, Q, S, T, U, V and W, with populations ranging from 2,200 to 4,500) and one larger township, R, with a population of 11,000. There are at present no proper branches in any of these, but in the county as a whole there are 230 centres.



The total expenditure of all these constituents in 1938-9 was £48,585, of which £12,106 was spent on books and binding (£9,820 on books and £2,286 on binding). The staff then totalled 101 and the amount spent on salaries was £16,912. In addition £2,700 was spent on wages of caretakers, etc. For the current year (1941-2) the estimated total expenditure has risen to £53,172. The total population of the "unit" was (in 1938) 637,000. The average expenditure per head of population was 18·27d.—not more than half the amount per head which is now being expended by certain progressive library authorities.

The new unit will be a Grade 3 unit. As will be seen from the map, the area falls into four sections and "regionalization" can appropriately be adopted. "B" will be the Area Library for Region 1 in the north, "C" for Region 4 in the

south, and "F", the largest of a cluster of small towns in the south central portion, for Region 3. The remainder, Region 2, will be served direct from headquarters, which will be at the largest town "A", where also is the Main Library.

The total staff suggested (with the appropriate salaries in accordance with scales to be discussed in Ch. XVII) is as follows :

*Headquarters Staff :*

Unit Chief Librarian .. .. .	£950-1,100
Deputy Librarian .. .. .	655- 740
Superintendent of Branches .. .. .	455- 515
Transport Officer .. .. .	320- 380
Chief of Accessions Department .. .. .	455- 515
Chief of Main Reference Department .. .. .	455- 515
Assistant in charge of Special Collection .. .. .	380- 450
Secretary and Treasurer .. .. .	455- 515
Superintendent of Buildings .. .. .	365- 425
Chief Cataloguer .. .. .	365- 425
Chief Assistants :	
to Superintendent of Branches .. .. .	320- 380
to Reference Librarian (Main Library) .. .. .	320- 380
in charge Special Activities .. .. .	320- 380
in charge Special Requests .. .. .	320- 380
Assistant in charge Work with Children .. .. .	320- 380
7 Professional Assistants .. .. .	Gen. Prof. Scale
21 Non-professional Assistants .. .. .	Non-prof. Scale

*A. Main Library :*

Librarian .. .. .	£560-620
Principal Assistant .. .. .	410-470
Assistant in charge Lending Department .. .. .	365-425
7 Professional Assistants .. .. .	Scale
10 Non-professional Assistants .. .. .	Scale

*B. Central Library (Area Library) :*

Librarian (allowing £50 extra as Area Librarian) .. .. .	£550-610
Principal Assistant .. .. .	365-425
Assistant in charge Reference Library .. .. .	320-380
Assistant in charge Lending Library .. .. .	320-380
3 Professional Assistants .. .. .	Scale
6 Non-professional Assistants .. .. .	Scale

*C. Central Library (Area Library) :*

Librarian (allowing £25 extra as Area Librarian) .. .. .	£465-525
4 Professional Assistants .. .. .	Scale
5 Non-professional Assistants .. .. .	Scale

*F. Central Library (Area Library) :*

Librarian (allowing £50 extra as Area Librarian) .. .. .	£430-490
4 Professional Assistants .. .. .	Scale
5 Non-professional Assistants .. .. .	Scale

*D. District Library (staff of 4) :*

Librarian in charge .. .. .	£320-380
1 Professional Assistant .. .. .	Scale
2 Non-professional Assistants .. .. .	Scale

*E. District Library (staff of 7) :*

Librarian in charge .. .. .	£365-425
2 Professional Assistants .. .. .	Scale
4 Non-professional Assistants .. .. .	Scale

**R. Whole-time Branch (3 Assistants) :**

2 Professional Assistants	..	..	..	Scale
1 Non-professional Assistant	..	..	..	Scale

**G. Whole-time Branch (2 Assistants) :**

1 Professional Assistant	..	..	..	Scale
1 Non-professional Assistant	..	..	..	Scale

**Town Branches :****At A. : Branch 1 (5 Assistants) :**

Librarian in charge	..	..	..	£320-380
2 Professional Assistants	..	..	..	Scale
2 Non-professional Assistants	..	..	..	Scale

**Branch 2 (5 Assistants) :**

The same as 1.

**Branch 3 (4 Assistants) :**

Librarian in charge	..	..	..	£320-380
1 Professional Assistant	..	..	..	Scale
2 Non-professional Assistants	..	..	..	Scale

**Branch 4 (4 Assistants) :**

The same as 3.

**4 Branches (5, 6, 7 and 8) (3 Assistants) :**

At each, 2 Professional Assistants	..	..	Scale
1 Non-professional Assistant	..	..	Scale

**At B. Branches 9 and 10 (3 Assistants) :**

At each, 2 Professional Assistants	..	..	Scale
1 Non-professional Assistant	..	..	Scale

**Branches 11 and 12 (2 Assistants) :**

At each, 1 Professional Assistant	..	..	Scale
1 Non-professional Assistant	..	..	Scale

**At E. Branch 13 (2 Assistants) :**

1 Professional Assistant	..	..	Scale
1 Non-professional Assistant	..	..	Scale

**At F. Part-time Branch 14 :**

1 Professional Assistant	..	..	Scale
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**13 Part-time Branches, Centres, Travelling Libraries, etc. :**

Allow 24 Professional Assistants for work with part-time branches, centres, travelling libraries, extra work at Area Libraries, etc. Also allow 3 Non-professional Assistants, being one at each Area Library, for extra non-professional work connected with Centre exchanges, etc.

This means that there are 30 persons employed at Higher Scale rates (appropriate salaries given against each in the preceding lists), 77 Professional Assistants and 75 Non-professional Assistants—a total of 182, an average of one member of staff per 3,500 of population.

To assess what the total salaries will be when the unit is well established after a few years we have estimated the salaries as follows : all higher professional grades are calculated at the median (half-way between minimum and maximum). We have assumed that half the professionals on the general scale will be men and half women, and that one-quarter of those in the non-professional grade will be men and three-quarters women. We have, further, estimated one-third of the

grade professionals and non-professionals as being at the maximum, one-third at the minimum and one-third in the middle of the scales. This is probably a generous allowance. The totals are thus :

Higher grades	..	..	..	..	..	£12,465
General Professionals	..	..	..	..	..	18,978
Non-professionals	..	..	..	..	..	11,400
Grand total	..	..	..	..	..	<hr/> £42,843 <hr/>

The other main item of expenditure in the new budget is £23,891 for books at the rate of 9d. per head of total population. The present average expenditure per head on books is only 3·7d. We may reasonably assume that the same total expenditure on maintenance, etc., including wages, will suffice (as the existing premises, excepting that there are no branches in the rural districts, will be adequate). There will be some small additional expenditure on headquarters costs but this will be offset by sundry reductions due to co-ordination and to the closing of newsrooms, etc. For binding we allow £7,000. For each of the part-time branches we allow £200 as an ample average to cover rent of premises, maintenance, loan charges, etc.

Thus our total budget is as follows :

Salaries	..	..	..	..	..	..	£42,843
Books	..	..	..	..	..	..	23,891
Binding	..	..	..	..	..	..	7,000
New part-time Branches				..	..	..	2,600
Other expenditure	..	..	..	..	..	..	19,500
							<hr/> 95,834 <hr/>
Deduct Government grant of 50 per cent	..						47,917
							<hr/> £47,917 <hr/>

Thus the total cost to the local rates of the unit area would be £668 less than the 1938-9 expenditure and £5,255 (or nearly 10 per cent) less than the 1941-2 estimates.

It should be stressed that the unit budget given is that for a well-developed service and, for several years, costs will certainly be lower.\* Even so the total cost (i.e. local costs and government grant *together*) is only a trifle over 3s. per head of population, an average which is *now* attained by several local authorities. Nevertheless, though it will be seen that *with* government grant the cost to local authorities will be less than it is now in this same area and that without government grant it would still be below the cost of present best practice, we are frankly not using this as the main argument. What really matters is that this new unit will give an immeasurably better service, with proper coverage throughout the area, with a really good stock fully available to all, and thoroughly qualified staff at all service points. This unit will surely be capable of giving these 637,000 people an excellent public library service, conceived on lines not yet truly exemplified anywhere in this country.

*Problems of Special Areas.* Certain parts of Great Britain, and Northern Ireland, offer special difficulties arising either from sparsity or density of population.

*Scotland.* Four of the units—two in the North and two in the South, cover exceptionally wide areas. This cannot be avoided owing to the absence of large

\* Obviously also the difference will be less where the components are at present reasonably above the average, e.g. where a fairly adequate amount is being spent on books and salaries. Present expenditure on both these essentials is, frankly, much too low in the elements of this example.

towns suitable as main libraries. The two Highland units in particular will need to develop a sound transport system in which sea, and even air, communications will be utilized to supplement road and rail.

*Wales.* The thinly populated counties forming the Mid-Wales unit will undoubtedly best be served by a semi-national system administered in close association with the National Library of Wales.

*Northern Ireland.* One, national, unit is suggested, no town excepting Belfast being suitable as the headquarters of any unit.

*The Isle of Man and the Channel Islands* have been omitted from the scheme as they have independent governmental systems. If it can be arranged, however, it will be best if the library services of these areas can be united with appropriate units on the mainland—and clearly in each case the “appropriate unit” is that which embraces the chief British port used by residents in these islands.

### GREATER LONDON

Greater London presents serious difficulties, though we believe these not to be insuperable provided we keep before us a clear picture of the nature of desirable organization for library services. It is very easy, when confronted with so large an area, to jump to the conclusion that it is an exception calling for a different approach. Such is not the case. London, essentially, is no different from South Lancashire or the West Riding of Yorkshire and we shall be wise to tackle its problems armed with precisely similar general principles. Let us approach the problem from two angles: (a) that of service to the public and (b) that of organization into units (or otherwise).

Greater London covers an area of about 700 square miles and embraces a population of 9,000,000 people; we cannot be more precise for no one can define the boundary of Greater London—there are already several different administrative boundaries varying with the needs of the services concerned—transport, police, electricity, etc.

The life of this population is to a great extent focused upon central London, whither hundreds of thousands journey each day to work, to shop or to find amusement. But it would be a gross mistake to exaggerate this factor. Many more inhabitants do not regularly go to the centre than do; many work in the districts in which they live; a considerable majority, including women and children, do not turn to the centre save for occasional and exceptional purposes; a large number do indeed travel from their homes to work, not in the centre, but in other parts of the outer circles.

When considering library provision, therefore, we must remember both residential and occupational factors, both static conditions and those arising from movements. In other words there are two kinds of library use—those which are associated with the place of residence and those which are associated with the place of occupation. The individual who does not move regularly from his or her residential area will need to have all his general library provision *within* that area. The individual who does work away from home will want, near his place of work, that type of library service which is associated with his work; he may prefer to have his general library provision readily available during his evening leisure hours near his home. Clearly, therefore, we must avoid excessive centralization of general services. Broadly speaking, we must give library service as near the homes of Tooting and Poplar, and Hendon and Hackney, as to the homes of Stretford and Eccles or Dewsbury and Headingley. That is to say, the bulk of non-special library service must be based upon residential factors.

Thus, in any district of greater London, we find precisely the same need as elsewhere for the general pattern of library organization—the handy Branch, the readily accessible Central Library, and the Regional Reference Library and Special Libraries. The moral of this is clear—we cannot be satisfied with insufficient or

inadequate Central Libraries in the London area. On the contrary the need is greater than elsewhere. There are two outstanding reasons for this: (a) more people go regularly for ordinary purposes to the smaller provincial urban centres than would go to the centre of London for purposes which could be associated with ordinary library use and (b) there are not as many obvious and clear sub-centres in the London area as there are elsewhere. Conditions in London produce large numbers of less obvious and more frequent centres. There are, of course, several outstanding sub-centres in London, such as Hammersmith Broadway, Tooting Broadway, the Elephant and Castle, the Angel, and Camden Town, and undoubtedly good Central Libraries should be sited near these. But it would be a mistake to think that we could limit central library provision to a dozen or so such places, because most of the population would remain too far from any of them and communications in London are not helpful for many cross-country or intermediate journeys. Paradoxical though it may sound it is nevertheless true that distances are at once greater and less in London than elsewhere—that it is often more difficult, less convenient, and less likely to appeal to residents to make relatively short journeys to places which are not on their normal routes of everyday life, but that conversely it may be easier and take little longer to go much further towards the centre. For example the resident of Belsize Park might find it *easier* to go to Westminster than to Finchley Road.

Thorough and generous Central and Branch provision throughout the area is therefore essential. Difficulty arises, however, when we consider the extent of the provision to be made at these Central Libraries, if we would avoid both duplication and uneconomical effort, and starvation. Here again, our general principles help us. At each Central Library we must give whatever services can be justified by local uses—and we must see that the additional, more specialized, services are given elsewhere. It is in these two respects that the London Libraries service at present breaks down. On the one hand some of the borough central libraries are attempting too much or doing too little; on the other hand no one is doing, properly, the genuine "regional" work, as it is being done in, say, Manchester. With a properly co-ordinated library system it is easy to overcome these difficulties—each local library, knowing what is available elsewhere, can itself give as much as is needed locally and no more.

There is thus a hierarchy of libraries appropriate for London. Every resident should have easy access to the basic, medium-sized branch library; few residents, save in the thinly populated outskirts, should have to go more than a mile. Central Libraries should also be reasonably handy. We must remember that most of the use will be in the evenings; therefore visits must not involve long or tiring journeys. All London Central Libraries should be comparable with other unit central libraries. Some of them should be comparable with Unit Main Libraries. Lending stocks would contain all but specialized material, plus specialized material of particular local significance. Reference Libraries should contain everything likely to be of general value to the community, plus locally important material. The Main Libraries might sometimes house special collections.

But the Main Libraries should not go too far—they should not trespass upon the provinces of the Regional Reference Library or the Regional Lending Libraries because, for such special purposes, journeys to London are easy. The Main Libraries of most provincial units are far from the nearest Regional Reference Library and accordingly must provide more than those which are near them. For example the Main Library at Exeter, the nearest Regional Reference Library to which is Bristol, must cover a wider field than the Main Library at Wigan which is relatively nearer the Regional Library at Liverpool or Manchester. All London libraries will be within fairly easy reach of Central London.

This consideration of public needs therefore suggests the following lay-out: Main Libraries (each the Headquarters of library units), Central Libraries (within

units), and really comprehensive Regional Libraries, Reference and Lending, in the heart of London.

It will have been noted that though elsewhere we have spoken of the Regional Libraries as being Reference Libraries only, we here refer to a Regional *Lending* Library. The explanation is simple. We feel that there is a genuine place in so vast an area for a super-central Lending Library aiming at near comprehensiveness so far as current material is concerned. On the one hand so many people do, or can, visit the centre of London that it would be a great convenience to them to have such a library at which they could see and from which they could borrow a really wide range of material; on the other hand it would reduce considerably the work and delays of much inter-library lending.

Coming to the question of organization, we have four alternatives: (a) a library authority for the whole of London, (b) the London County Council as library authority for the county of London, (c) the maintenance of the existing authorities, or (d) the adoption of the normal unit system.

Take these in turn. (a) Greater London is far, far too big an area—and who could say where to stop when fixing its boundary. We have already discussed the disadvantages of the over-large unit—loss of local interest, control, contacts and appropriateness, the dangers and delays of an unwieldy machine, the danger of having so powerful an element to disturb the balance of the national service. All available experience, here and abroad, is emphatically against such large groupings for library service. (b) The County of London also is far too large an area to be served by one library authority; moreover, in relation to Greater London it is a purely arbitrary area. (c) The continuance of the existing unco-ordinated systems of some 73 unrelated authorities of all types and sizes cannot be recommended as it presents all those evil features we have been compelled to denounce elsewhere.

There remains the unit system. Is it practicable? Let us remind ourselves of the prime virtue of the unit—that it shall be large enough to provide, within itself, all but the more specialized needs of readers, to employ fully a balanced staff including men and women of professional and special abilities, that it shall as far as possible embrace a natural congregation of people and be related to their ways of living and their normal comings and goings. Admittedly any division of London into units will introduce administrative boundaries which cannot be strictly related to the needs of all readers. But such boundaries already exist and we shall considerably reduce them by unit amalgamations; moreover, with a series of comparable units there will be effective interavailability so that each reader can use whatever library he prefers. In any case this boundary factor is the same here as elsewhere. There must be boundaries, but they are only boundaries of administration, not of use—and in general we have tried so to place the boundary that there is a similar type of service on either side (e.g. if it passes through country, the normal service points immediately on either side will be centres and small branches; if it goes through suburban areas, they will be town branches, etc.).

A close examination shows no insuperable obstacle to the division of London into units. The suggested units are detailed, with those for the whole country, at the end of this chapter. It will be seen that all are amply large enough, all have suitable centres for Main Libraries and Central Libraries, all have some measure of geographical and social affinity, main lines of communication having been regarded as a vital factor in their determination. In general they are a series of wedges stretching out from the centre into the rural environs; thus they effectively link up and co-ordinate all elements, commercial, industrial, suburban and residential.

The London Regional services must of course be sited in Central London. Here the same simple basis for administration and finance as has been suggested elsewhere should be adopted. Just as, for example, the Regional Library at

Birmingham should be administered by the Unit of which Birmingham is a part and assisted by appropriate supplementary grants from the Appropriate Body, so should the London Regional Libraries be administered by the Central London Unit and similarly financed. We say Regional *Libraries*, not *Library*, because this regional service will serve so large a region—and indeed have national duties—that it may well be divided. For example, a Regional Commercial and Business Library might well be sited near the boundaries of the City, Westminster and Holborn; a comprehensive library of London history, topography and social life should find its home at the Guildhall, while Westminster could house collections on government and administration, on the arts of the theatre (as it is the world centre of the stage) and on similarly appropriate fields, as well as the general reference collections of the Regional Lending Library. In all this provision in Central London due regard would be had for the appropriate specializations of other inner Units. For example, the unit comprising St. Marylebone and Hampstead might best provide the Regional collections of music and musical literature and the unit embracing Kensington and Chelsea could deal with the fine arts and science. This last suggestion raises another point, as one of the reasons for allocating these subjects to the Kensington unit is the presence there of the national Science and Art Libraries. Obviously all specialized provision must be linked up, as closely and effectively as possible, with non-public special collections. With these the unit and regional libraries must not conflict. Is it not clear that once we accept the need for providing in London a library service worthy of the great metropolis, and once we devise a suitable framework, there is here a task and an opportunity of immeasurable interest and value? Yet, at the same time, the proper development of all other London units will prevent any excessive centralization, but instead will give to all parts of the area facilities at least equal to the best that will be enjoyed elsewhere.

#### DETAILS OF THE PROPOSED UNITS

Because we want this report to be as definite and clear as it is possible to make it, we have, with the invaluable help of Mr. Welsford and Mr. Henrik Jones, prepared the following complete schedule of proposed units covering the whole of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Although the preparation of this schedule has been a lengthy and difficult task involving detailed consideration of the geographical and social conditions of practically every element in the present local government system of the country, we believe it to be essential to the proper understanding of our proposals.

We do not suggest that this is an ideal and final scheme. On the contrary, we hope it can be improved as a result of discussion and suggestions from those with a more intimate knowledge of the circumstances of each area. We recognize fully that some of the divisions and boundaries are arbitrary because often conditions are such as to preclude any division which is not arbitrary. We have, however, kept well in mind the various basic principles described earlier in this chapter and to which we again refer our readers.

The primary objects of this list are to demonstrate, in concrete terms, exactly what we mean by the unit system and to show that it is a practical, workable, complete project.

The Name of the Unit is in each case merely a suggestion. As a rule we have avoided using the name of an existing library authority so as to remove any impression there may still be that the unit system means the taking over of one authority by another; it does not mean this—it means the creation of new areas. In our attempt to avoid existing names we have sometimes descended to the use of compass-point divisions; elsewhere we have been fanciful. The name given below the name of the unit is that of the place where it is suggested the Headquarters and Main Library should be situated.



ENGLAND			
Name of Unit and Headquarters.	Composition of Unit.	Total popln. in thousands.	Grade of Unit.
1. TYNESIDE AND NORTHUMBERLAND NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE	The County* of Northumberland; C.B.: Gateshead, South Shields; M.B.: Jarrow; U.D.: Blaydon, Felling, Hebburn, Ryton, Whickham	1,138	1†
2. CUMBRIA CARLISLE	The Counties of Cumberland and Westmorland; C.B.: Barrow-in-Furness; U.D.: Dalton-in-Furness, Ulverston; R.D.: Sedbergh, Ulverston	425	3
3. MID-DURHAM DURHAM	The County of Durham <i>except</i> the areas allotted to Tyneside and Teesside	883	2
4. TEESSIDE MIDDLESBROUGH	C.B.: Middlesbrough, West Hartlepool; M.B.: Hartlepool, Redcar, Stockton, Thornaby-on-Tees; U.D.: Billingham, Eston, Guisborough; R.D.: Bedale, Stockton	414	3
5. NORTH YORKSHIRE YORK	The North Riding of Yorkshire <i>except</i> those areas allotted to Teesside; C.B.: York; M.B.: Harrogate, Ripon; U.D.: Garforth, Knaresborough, Otley, Selby; R.D.: Derwent, Great Ouseburn, Knaresborough, Ripon and Pateley Bridge, Selby, Tadcaster, Wetherby, Wharfedale	522	3
6. EAST YORKSHIRE KINGSTON-UPON-HULL	The East Riding <i>except</i> Derwent R.D.	492	3
7. LEEDS AND DISTRICT LEEDS	C.B.: Dewsbury, Leeds; M.B.: Batley, Morley, Ossett, Pudsey; U.D.: Horsforth, Rothwell	705	2†
8. BRADFORD AND DISTRICT BRADFORD	C.B.: Bradford; M.B.: Keighley; U.D.: Aireborough, Baildon, Barnoldswick, Bingley, Denholme, Earby, Ilkley, Shipley, Skipton; R.D.: Bowland, Settle, Silsden, Skipton	522	3
9. WEST YORKSHIRE HUDDERSFIELD	C.B.: Halifax, Huddersfield; M.B.: Brighouse, Todmorden; U.D.: Colne Valley, Denby Dale, Elland, Hebden Royd, Heckmondwike, Holmfirth, Kirkburton, Meltham, Mirfield, Penistone, Queensbury and Shelf, Ripponden, Saddleworth, Sowerby Bridge, Spenborough; R.D.: Hepton, Penistone	503	3
10. MID-YORKSHIRE WAKEFIELD	C.B.: Barnsley, Doncaster, Wakefield; M.B.: Goole, Pontefract; U.D.: Adwick-le-Street, Bentley with Arksey, Castleford, Conisburgh, Cudworth, Darfield, Darton, Dearne, Dodworth, Featherstone, Hemsworth, Horbury, Hoyland Nether, Knottingley, Mexborough, Normanton, Royston, Stanley, Tickhill, Wath-upon-Deane, Wombwell, Worsborough; R.D.: Doncaster, Goole, Hemsworth, Osgoldcross, Thorne, Wakefield	727	2
11. SHEFFIELD AND DISTRICT SHEFFIELD	C.B.: Rotherham, Sheffield; U.D.: Maltby, Rawmarsh, Stocksbridge, Swinton; R.D.: Kiveton Park, Rotherham, Wortley	733	2†

\* The term *County* throughout applies to the geographical, not the administrative, County.

† Indicates a Regional Library.

Name of Unit and Headquarters, *	Composition of Unit.	Total popln. in thousands.	Grade of Unit.
12. NORTH LANCASHIRE PRESTON	The County* of the Isle of Man†; C.B.: Blackpool, Preston; M.B.: Fleetwood, Lancaster, Lytham St. Anne's, Morecambe and Heysham; U.D.: Carnforth, Fulwood, Grange, Kirkham, Longridge, Poulton-le-Fylde, Presall, Thornton Cleveleys, Walton-le-Dale; R.D.: Fylde, Garstang, Lancaster, Lunesdale, Preston	547	3
13. ROSSENDALE BLACKBURN	C.B.: Blackburn, Burnley; M.B.: Accrington, Bacup, Clitheroe, Colne, Darwen, Haslingden, Nelson, Rawtenstall; U.D.: Barrowford, Brierfield, Church, Clayton-le-Moors, Great Harwood, Oswaldtwistle, Padiham, Rishton, Trawden; R.D.: Blackburn, Burnley, Clitheroe	511	3
14. EAST LANCASHIRE ROCHDALE	C.B.: Oldham, Rochdale; M.B.: Heywood, Middleton; U.D.: Chadderton, Crompton, Lees, Littleborough, Milnrow, Royton, Wardle, Whitworth	366	4
15. MID-LANCASHIRE BOLTON	C.B.: Bolton, Bury; M.B.: Radcliffe; U.D.: Atherton, Farnworth, Horwich, Kearsley, Little Lever, Ramsbottom, Tottington, Turton, Tyldesley, Westhoughton, Whitefield, Worsley	438	3
16. WIGAN AND DISTRICT WIGAN	C.B.: St. Helens, Wigan; M.B.: Chorley, Leigh; U.D.: Abram, Adlington, Ashton-in-Makerfield, Aspull, Billinge and Winstanley, Blackrod, Golborne, Haydock, Hindley, Ince-in-Makerfield, Leyland, Orrell, Standish with Langtree, Upholland, Withnell; R.D.: Chorley, Wigan	447	3
17. LIVERPOOL AND DISTRICT LIVERPOOL	C.B.: Bootle, Liverpool, Southport; M.B.: Crosby; U.D.: Formby, Huyton with Roby, Litherland, Ormskirk, Prescott, Rainford, Skelmersdale; R.D.: West Lancashire, Whiston	1,195	1†
18. WARRINGTON AND DISTRICT WARRINGTON	C.B.: Warrington; M.B.: Widnes; U.D.: Lymm, Newton-le-Willows, Runcorn; R.D.: Runcorn, Warrington	224	4
19. MANCHESTER, SALFORD AND DISTRICT MANCHESTER	C.B.: Manchester, Salford, Stockport; M.B.: Ashton-under-Lyne, Dukinfield, Eccles, Glossop, Hyde, Mossley, Stalybridge, Stretford, Swinton and Pendlebury; U.D.: Audenshaw, Bredbury and Romiley, Cheadle and Gatley, Denton, Droylesden, Failsworth, Hale, Hazel Grove and Bramhall, Irlam, Longdendale, Marple, New Mills, Prestwich, Urmston; R.D.: Chapel-en-le-Frith (Part between New Mills and Glossop), Limehurst, Tintwistle	1,620	1†
20. WIRRAL BIRKENHEAD	C.B.: Birkenhead, Wallasey; M.B.: Bebington; U.D.: Ellesmere Port, Hoylake, Neston, Wirral	350	3

\* The term *County* throughout applies to the geographical, not the administrative, County.

† Indicates a Regional Library.

‡ Assuming this to be included (see p. 146).

Name of Unit and Headquarters	Composition of Unit.	Total popln. in thousands.	Grade of Unit.
21. CENTRAL CHESHIRE CHESTER	The County* of Cheshire <i>except</i> the areas allotted to Wirral, to Manchester, Salford and District, and to Warrington and District	440	4
22. DOVEDALE AND DERWENT DERBY	The County of Derbyshire <i>except</i> the area allotted to Manchester and District <i>plus</i> Burton-upon-Trent C.B. and Tutbury R.D.	797	2
23. ERMINE AND LINDSEY LINCOLN	The County of Lincolnshire <i>except</i> Stamford M.B., Bourne U.D., South Kesteven R.D. and the Parts of Holland	514	3
24. SHERWOOD NOTTINGHAM	The County of Nottinghamshire	749	2
25. NORTH STAFFORD STOKE-ON-TRENT	C.B. : Stoke-on-Trent ; M.B. : Lichfield, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Stafford, Tamworth ; U.D. : Biddulph, Kidsgrave, Leek, Rugeley, Stone, Uttoxeter ; R.D. : Cheadle, Leek, Lichfield, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Stafford, Stone, Uttoxeter	583	3
26. FENLAND PETERBOROUGH	The Soke of Peterborough, the Isle of Ely, The County of Huntingdon, the Parts of Holland, Stamford M.B., Bourne U.D., South Kesteven R.D.	318	5
27. NORWICH AND NORFOLK NORWICH	The County of Norfolk	502	3
28. IPSWICH AND EAST SUFFOLK IPSWICH	The County of East Suffolk	301	4
29. CAMBRIDGE AND WEST SUFFOLK CAMBRIDGE	The Counties of Cambridgeshire and West Suffolk, Saffron Walden M.B. and Saffron Walden R.D.	275	5
30. NORTH ESSEX CHELMSFORD	M.B. : Chelmsford, Colchester, Harwich ; U.D. : Braintree, Brentwood, Brightlingsea, Burnham-on-Crouch, Clacton, Epping, Frinton and Walton, Halstead, West Mersea, Witham, Wivenhoe ; R.D. : Braintree and Bocking, Chelmsford, Dunmow, Epping, Halstead, Lexden and Winstree, Maldon, Ongar, Tendring	371	4
31. SOUTH ESSEX SOUTHEND-ON-SEA	C.B. : Southend-on-Sea ; U.D. : Benfleet, Billericay, Canvey Island, Rayleigh, Thurrock ; R.D. : Rochford	288	4
32. BEDFORD AND NORTH HERTS. BEDFORD	The County of Bedfordshire ; M.B. : Hertford ; U.D. : Baldock, Bishop's Stortford, Bletchley, Cheshunt, Hitchin, Hoddesdon, Letchworth, Linslade, Newport Pagnell, Royston, Sawbridge-worth, Stevenage, Ware, Welwyn, Wolverton ; R.D. : Braughing, Hatfield, Hertford, Hitchin, Newport Pagnell, Ware, Welwyn, Wing, Winslow	502	3
33. NENE VALLEY NORTHAMPTON	The County of Northamptonshire <i>except</i> the Soke of Peterborough	318	4
34. LEICESTER AND RUTLAND LEICESTER	The Counties of Leicestershire and Rutland	584	3

\* The term *County* throughout applies to the geographical, not the administrative, County.

Name of Unit and Headquarters.	Composition of Unit.	Total popln. in thousands.	Grade of Unit.
35. COVENTRY AND WARWICKSHIRE COVENTRY	The County* of Warwickshire <i>except</i> the areas allotted to Birmingham	526	3
36. BIRMINGHAM AND DISTRICT BIRMINGHAM	C.B. : Birmingham, Smethwick, West Bromwich ; M.B. : Sutton Coldfield ; U.D. : Solihull	1,288	1†
37. WORCESTER AND HEREFORD WORCESTER	The Counties of Herefordshire and Worcestershire <i>except</i> the areas allotted to South Staffs.	380	4
38. SOUTH STAFFS. WOLVERHAMPTON	C.B. : Dudley, Walsall, Wolverhampton ; M.B. : Bilston, Halesowen, Oldbury, Rowley Regis, Stourbridge, Tipton, Wednesbury ; U.D. : Aldridge, Amblecote, Brierley Hill, Brownhills, Cannock, Coseley, Darlaston, Sedgley, Tettenhall, Wednesfield, Willenhall ; R.D. : Cannock, Seisdon	898	2
39. WREKIN SHREWSBURY	The County of Shropshire	241	
40. WEST HERTS. WATFORD	M.B. : Aylesbury, Chepping Wycombe, Hemel Hempstead, St. Albans, Watford ; U.D. : Beaconsfield, Berkhamsted, Bushey, Chesham, Chorleywood, Harpenden, Marlow, Rickmansworth, Tring ; R.D. : Amersham, Aylesbury, Berkhamsted, Hemel Hempstead, St. Albans, Watford, Wycombe	394	3
41. CHERWELL OXFORD	The County of Oxfordshire <i>except</i> Henley-on-Thames M.B. and Henley R.D. but <i>with the addition of</i> Abingdon M.B. and R.D., Buckingham M.B. and R.D., Faringdon R.D.	252	4
42. LOWER SEVERN GLOUCESTER	The County of Gloucestershire <i>except</i> those areas allotted to Bristol and District	313	3
43. BRISTOL AND DISTRICT BRISTOL	C.B. : Bristol ; M.B. : Weston-super-Mare ; U.D. : Clevedon, Keynsham, Kingswood, Mangotsfield, Portishead ; R.D. : Axbridge, Clutton, Long Ashton, Sodbury, Thornbury, Warmley	609	2†
44. SOUTH SOMERSET TAUNTON	The County of Somerset <i>except</i> those areas allotted to Bristol and District and to Bath and North Wilts.	248	3
45. EXETER AND EAST DEVON EXETER	The County of Devon <i>except</i> those areas allotted to Cornwall and West Devon	466	3
46. CORNWALL AND WEST DEVON PLYMOUTH	The County of Cornwall ; C.B. : Plymouth ; U.D. : Holsworthy, Tavistock ; R.D. : Broadwood Widger, Holsworthy, Plympton St. Mary, Tavistock	586	3
47. BATH AND NORTH WILTS BATH	The County of Wiltshire <i>except</i> those areas allotted to Southampton and District, <i>plus</i> C.B. : Bath ; U.D. : Frome, Norton-Radstock ; R.D. : Bath-avon, Frome	361	4

\* The term *County* throughout applies to the geographical, not the administrative, County.

† Indicates a Regional Library.

Name of Unit and Headquarters.	Composition of Unit.	Total popln. in thousands.	Grade of Unit.
48. WESSEX BOURNEMOUTH	The County* of Dorset; C.B.: Bournemouth; M.B.: Christchurch, Lymington; R.D.: Ringwood and Fordingbridge	425	4
49. SOUTHAMPTON AND DISTRICT SOUTHAMPTON	C.B.: Southampton; M.B.: Romsey, Salisbury, Wilton, Winchester; U.D.: Eastleigh; R.D.: Amesbury, New Forest, Romsey and Stockbridge, Salisbury and Wilton, Winchester	388	3
50. PORTSMOUTH, WIGHT AND WEST SUSSEX PORTSMOUTH	The County of the Isle of Wight; C.B.: Portsmouth; M.B.: Arundel, Chichester, Gosport; U.D.: Alton, Bognor Regis, Fareham, Havant and Waterloo, Littlehampton, Petersfield; R.D.: Alton, Chichester, Droxford, Midhurst, Petersfield, Petworth	622	2
51. MID-THAMES READING	The County of Berkshire <i>except</i> those areas allotted to Cherwell; M.B.: Basingstoke, Henley-on-Thames, Slough; U.D.: Andover, Eton, Fleet; R.D.: Andover, Basingstoke, Eton, Hartley Wintney, Henley, Kingsclere and Whitechurch	500	3
52. BRIGHTON AND MID-SUSSEX BRIGHTON	C.B.: Brighton; M.B.: Hove, Lewes, Worthing; U.D.: Burgess Hill, Cuckfield, Horsham, Newhaven, Portslade, Seaford, Shoreham, Southwick; R.D.: Chailey, Chancetonbury, Cuckfield, Horsham, Worthing	466	3
53. EASTBOURNE AND EAST SUSSEX EASTBOURNE	C.B.: Eastbourne, Hastings; M.B.: Bexhill, Rye; U.D.: East Grinstead; R.D.: Battle, Hailsham, Uckfield	259	4
54. EAST KENT CANTERBURY	C.B.: Canterbury; M.B.: Deal, Dover, Folkestone, Hythe, Margate, Ramsgate, Sandwich; U.D.: Broadstairs and St. Peters, Herne Bay, Whitstable; R.D.: Bridge-Blean, Dover, Eastry, Elham	325	5
55. MID-KENT MAIDSTONE	M.B.: Lydd, Maidstone, New Romney, Royal Tunbridge Wells, Tenterden; U.D.: Ashford, Sevenoaks, Southborough, Tonbridge; R.D.: Cranbrook, East Ashford, Hollingbourne, Maidstone, Malling, Romney Marsh, Sevenoaks, Tenterden, Tonbridge, West Ashford	298	5
56. MEDWAY GILLINGHAM	M.B.: Chatham, Faversham, Gillingham, Queenborough, Rochester; U.D.: Sheerness, Sittingbourne and Milton; R.D.: Sheppey, Strood, Swale	250	5
57. LOWER THAMES DARTFORD	M.B.: Erith, Gravesend; U.D.: Bexley, Crayford, Dartford, Northfleet, Swanscombe; R.D.: Dartford	276	5
58. WEST KENT BROMLEY	M.B.: Beckenham, Bromley; U.D.: Chislehurst and Sidcup, Orpington, Penge	264	5
59. CROYDON AND EAST SURREY CROYDON	C.B.: Croydon; M.B.: Beddington and Wallington, Mitcham, Reigate; U.D.: Banstead, Carshalton, Caterham and Warlingham, Coulsdon and Purley; R.D.: Godstone	572	3

\* The term *County* throughout applies to the geographical, not the administrative, County.

Name of Unit and Headquarters	Composition of Unit.	Total popln. in thousands.	Grade of Unit.
60. NORTH SURREY KINGSTON	M.B.: Epsom and Ewell, Kingston-on-Thames, Malden and Coombe, Surbiton, Sutton and Cheam, Wimbledon; U.D.: Esher, Merton and Morden	431	4
61. NORTH DOWNS GUILDFORD	M.B.: Aldershot, Godalming, Guildford; U.D.: Chertsey, Dorking, Egham, Farnborough, Farnham, Frimley and Camberley, Haslemere, Leatherhead, Walton and Weybridge, Woking; R.D.: Bagshot, Dorking and Horley, Guildford, Hambledon	403	4
62. SOUTH MIDDLESEX AND RICHMOND HOUNSLOW	M.B.: Barnes, Heston and Isleworth, Richmond, Twickenham; U.D.: Feltham, Staines, Sunbury-on-Thames, Yiewsley and West Drayton	370	4
63. WEST MIDDLESEX EALING	M.B.: Acton, Brentford and Chiswick, Ealing, Southall; U.D.: Hayes and Harlington, Uxbridge	430	3
64. CENTRAL MIDDLESEX WILLESDEN	M.B.: Wembley, Willesden; U.D.: Harrow, Ruislip-Northwood	531	3
65. EDGWARE-BARNET HENDON	M.B.: Finchley, Hendon; U.D.: Barnet, Potters Bar; R.D.: Barnet	253	4
66. NORTH MIDDLESEX SOUTHGATE	M.B.: Edmonton, Hornsey, Southgate, Tottenham, Wood Green; U.D.: East Barnet, Enfield, Horn Barnet	617	3
67. LEA VALLEY WALTHAMSTOW	M.B.: Chingford, Leyton, Walthamstow, Wanstead and Woodford; U.D.: Chigwell, Waltham Holy Cross	371	3
68. EAST AND WEST HAM WEST HAM	C.B.: East Ham, West Ham	384	3
69. SOUTH-WEST ESSEX ILFORD	M.B.: Barking, Dagenham, Ilford, Romford; U.D.: Hornchurch	482	3

## LONDON METROPOLITAN BOROUGHES

1. EAST LONDON STEPNEY	Bethnal Green, Poplar, Stepney	428	3
2. NORTH-EAST LONDON HACKNEY	Hackney, Shoreditch, Stoke Newington	336	3
3. NORTH LONDON ST. PANCRAS	Islington, St. Pancras	472	3
4. CENTRAL LONDON	City of London, Finsbury, Holborn, Westminster ( <i>less</i> the Hamlet of Knightsbridge)	220	2*
5. NORTH-WEST LONDON ST. MARYLEBONE	Hampstead, Paddington, St. Marylebone	319	3
6. WEST LONDON KENSINGTON	Chelsea, Fulham, Hammersmith, Kensington ( <i>plus</i> the Hamlet of Knightsbridge)	497	3
7. SOUTH-WEST LONDON BATTERSEA	Battersea, Wandsworth	482	3
8. SOUTH-EAST LONDON DEPTFORD	Bermondsey, Deptford, Greenwich, Lewisham, Woolwich	669	3
9. SOUTH LONDON LAMBETH	Camberwell, Lambeth, Southwark	641	3

\* Indicates a Regional Library.

## WALES AND MONMOUTHSHIRE

Name of Unit and Headquarters.	Composition of Unit.	Total popln. in thousands.	Grade of Unit.
1. NEWPORT AND MONMOUTH NEWPORT	The County* of Monmouthshire	402	3
2. CARDIFF AND EAST GLAMORGAN CARDIFF	C.B.: Cardiff, Merthyr Tydfil; M.B.: Cowbridge, Barry; U.D.: Aberdare, Bridgend, Caerphilly, Gelligaer, Glyn-corwg, Maesteg, Mountain Ash, Ogmore and Garw, Penarth, Pontypridd, Porthcawl, Rhondda; R.D.: Cardiff, Cowbridge, Llantrisant and Llantwitfardre, Penybont	812	2†
3. SWANSEA AND WEST GLAMORGAN SWANSEA	C.B.: Swansea; M.B.: Llanelly, Neath, Port Talbot; U.D.: Ammanford, Burry Port, Cwmamman, Llŷchwyr; R.D.: Gower, Llanelly, Neath, Pontardawe	433	3
MID-WALES ABERYSTWYTH	The Counties of Anglesey, Caernarvon, Merioneth, Montgomery, Radnor, Cardigan, Brecknock, Pembroke, Carmarthen ( <i>less</i> the areas allotted to Swansea and West Glamorgan)	540	3
5. NORTH WALES WREXHAM	The Counties of Flint and Denbigh	278	5

## SCOTLAND

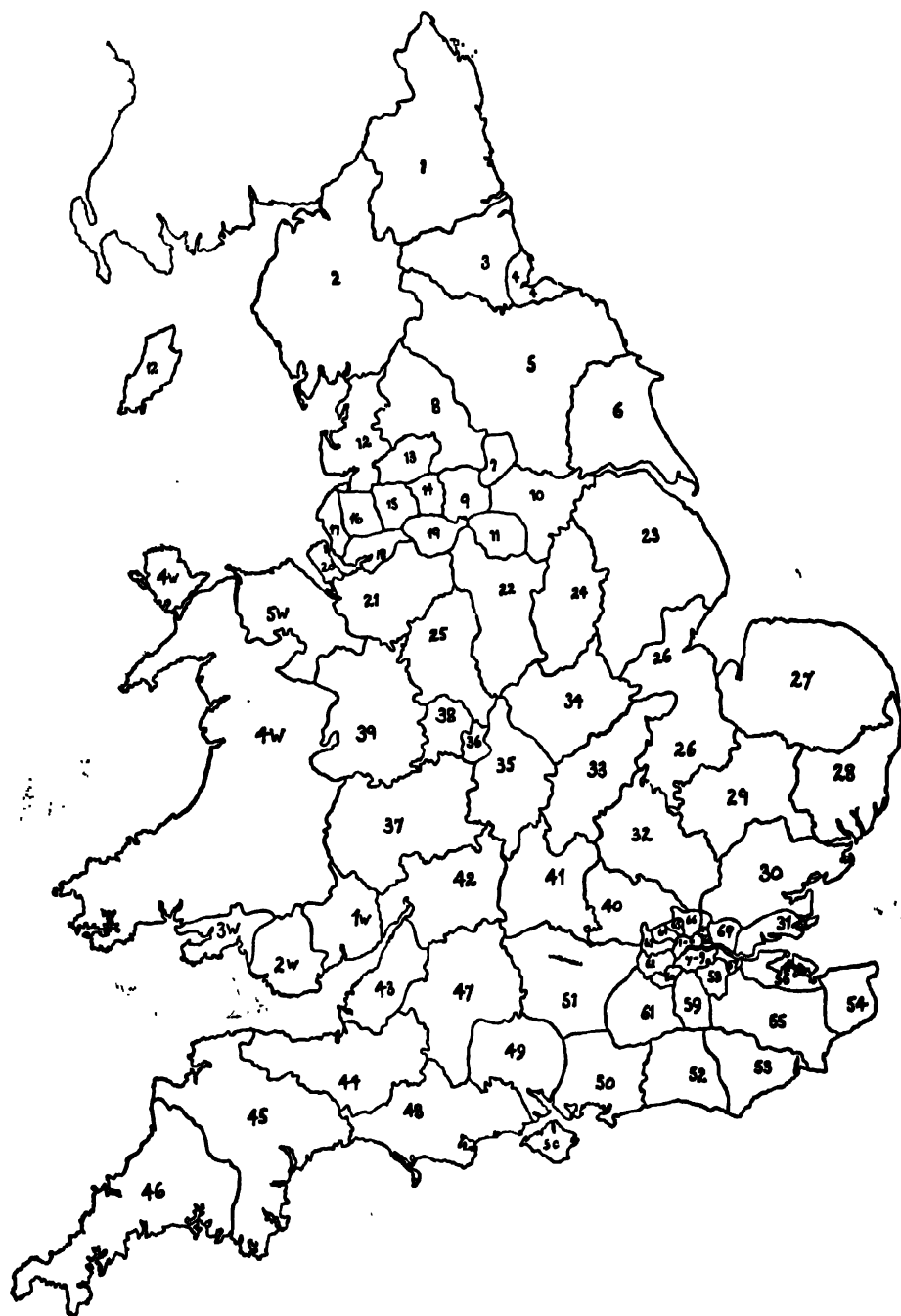
1. NORTH SCOTLAND ABERDEEN	The Counties of Aberdeen, Banff, Caithness, Inverness, Kincardine, Moray, Nairn, Orkney, Ross and Cromarty, Sutherland, Zetland	682	2
2. WEST SCOTLAND DUNBARTON	The Counties of Argyll, Bute, Dunbarton ( <i>less</i> Clydebank), Stirling	359	4
3. ANGUS AND PERTH DUNDEE	The Counties of Angus and Perth	393	3
4. FIFE AND DISTRICT DUNFERMLINE	The Counties of Clackmannan, Fife, Kinross	324	4
5. GLASGOW AND DISTRICT GLASGOW	Glasgow, Glasgow Parish, Clydebank, Rutherglen, Cadder Parish	1,221	1†
6. CLYDESIDE PAISLEY	The County of Renfrew	317	4
7. SOUTH-WEST SCOTLAND AYR	The Counties of Ayr, Dumfries, Wigtown, The Stewartry of Kirkcudbright	436	4
8. UPPER CLYDE HAMILTON	The County of Lanark <i>except</i> those areas allotted to Glasgow and District	463	3
9. EDINBURGH-TWEED EDINBURGH	The Counties of Berwick, East Lothian, Midlothian, Peebles, Roxburgh, Selkirk, West Lothian	799	2†

## NORTHERN IRELAND

NORTHERN IRELAND BELFAST	The State of Northern Ireland	1,280	1†
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\* The term *County* throughout applies to the geographical, not the administrative, County.

† Indicates a Regional Library.





## CO-OPERATION, SPECIALIZATION AND NATIONAL PROJECTS

In this chapter we consider briefly certain developments which will be additional to the services provided by the units and which will make possible the full utilization of the resources in material and personnel of the whole nation. These are Regional Reference libraries, Special libraries, the N.C.L., and inter-library loans, Central Cataloguing and similar projects.

The first need little further explanation. Though the main library of each unit must have a sound and comprehensive reference library capable of meeting most of the requirements of its users, there will surely remain an immense field of research work, scholarship and highly specialized and individualized needs which it cannot attempt to cover. Yet, as it is of the greatest importance to collect and make available such extensive and varied material, we must maintain a number of really large regional reference libraries. These must be available to all. They are indeed *now* open to any who visit them, but we would go further in two respects—we would have it a right and not merely a privilege for non-residents to use them and, more important, we would incorporate them into the national system so that all unit libraries would turn to them for the help and information required by their own residents. The stocks of these regional libraries will of course not be available for loan as they are essentially places to which the student will go, perhaps from long distances, and he will rightly expect to find the books he wants always there. But the expert staffs can handle enquiries passed on to them from units, they can supply information and perhaps photostats or micro-film copies and extracts, and they can refer the unit librarian to books, etc., which he may obtain elsewhere.

These regional reference libraries must not be too numerous or considerable waste will result, but they should be reasonably accessible to those in different parts of the country. Above all they must be as good and thorough as we can make them, which is an additional reason for not attempting to maintain too many. We suggest the following: Belfast, Birmingham, Bristol, Cardiff, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Sheffield and Central London.

These will, of course, all serve as the main reference libraries of their respective units and a great part of their use will arise from local demands. Nevertheless they will be of such wider value that, having a national as well as a local function, we should ask for special grants from the Appropriate Body towards the costs involved by this recognized extension of their activities, notably the additional staff required. The amount of such grants cannot be determined by any formula but can be agreed by the unit authorities and the officers of the Appropriate Body according to prevailing circumstances.

Secondly, we must develop specialization. Here we merely carry the implication of our general proposals a stage further. These aim at avoiding duplication and deficiency by uniting the efforts and resources of previously inadequate and unco-ordinated elements into a whole, the duties of which in relation to the general body of readers should be clear. But we do not suggest that these units will be completely self-sufficient. There will still remain a great deal over and above normal unit provision. Just as we have attempted to organize the basic service, can we not organize this specialized service? If we do not do so, will we not have, on an even more expensive scale, repetition of former evils? Each unit, while being clear as to its basic obligations, will be doubtful as to its more specialized duties. These, however, are also capable of co-ordination.

Might we not, for example, survey the field of knowledge and, so far as is practicable, divide it into suitable divisions each of which could usefully be allocated to a different unit. Each unit, given preferably a division appropriate for local reasons, would then become the national clearing house and information centre for that subject. Other places may need also to develop specialization in the same subject to meet local needs and they could do so, not in isolation, but in association with the national specializing unit. This unit would not only collect material on intensive lines; even more important, it would employ suitable assistants who would become specialists in their subject to an extent not otherwise possible and it would be their duty to keep in touch with whatever was being done by other public and non-public libraries. Each might well be provided with a union catalogue of its own field, and would build up indexes, abstracts and information files. Between them they would not cover the whole field of knowledge, for there are many matters which do not fall readily into compartments and some indivisible subjects too big to be compassed by any one specialist department. These matters would be the province of the large regional reference libraries and the N.C.L. There are, however, sufficient clearly definable specializations for us to find one appropriate to each of our units. Three great advantages would result: (a) the unit libraries would know, broadly, the limits to which they were justified in going locally and where to turn when those limits were reached; (b) the all too immense task of the N.C.L. and regional reference libraries would be reduced; thus they would be relieved of those fields which, calling for specialized staff they could not hope to provide, would present the greatest difficulty; (c) each library unit and its staff would enjoy the benefits of contact with specialization and all it implies: certain of the staff would have the opportunity of studying advanced methods of research and special library organization; all would be reminded of the wider use and implications of library work. The unit would gain in prestige as an integral element in the intelligent and thorough exploitation of knowledge in the advancement of national and international well-being. The public library will not enjoy its full place in the opinion of men so long as it sets itself a limited bibliographical objective. As Mr. Savage once rightly remarked—the exact words are forgotten—the public library cannot complain that it does not enjoy the support of the scholar if it makes no provision for him, but where it does the scholar will gladly use the public library. The public library must claim as its own the whole field of librarianship—not, of course, by competing with the many non-public libraries, national, university and special, but by securing the fullest co-operation with them, by taking them into consideration as elements in a joint enterprise, helping them, seeking their help, and, by mutual consultation, removing the gaps and overlapping which now exist.

Before proceeding, let us indicate the type of unit specialization of which we are thinking:

Coventry	..	the internal combustion engine
Birmingham	..	non-ferrous metals.
Hull	..	timber.
Watford	..	photography.
Northampton	..	leather.
Derby	..	railways.
Sheffield	..	steel.
Leeds	..	clothing.
Portsmouth	..	naval history.
Stoke	..	pottery.
Aberdeen	..	fishing.
Dundee	..	jute and hemp.
Guildford	..	military history.
Canterbury	..	ecclesiastical history.
Chelmsford	..	horticulture.

In addition to such collections, every unit would specialize in local history and in the life and work of eminent people particularly associated with the neighbourhood.

The position of non-public libraries in the general library system is one we must approach on a friendly and individual rather than formal or legal basis. These libraries are so various as regards character, support and resources that each is a law unto itself. Some are maintained by the state (e.g. the Science Library, the Library of the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Patent Office Library, the Library of the British Museum (Natural History), the Libraries of the Department of Industrial and Scientific Research, etc.), some by universities, technical colleges and other educational institutions, some by professional bodies (the Pharmaceutical Society, the Institute of Mechanical Engineers, the Royal Institute of British Architects, the British Medical Association, etc.), by learned societies (the Royal Horticultural Society, the Linnean Society, the Royal Entomological Society of London, the Chemical Society, etc.). Others are privately endowed libraries (the John Rylands Library, Dr. Williams's Free Library, the Chetham Library, etc.), proprietary libraries (London Library, Newcastle Literary and Philosophical Society, etc.), the libraries maintained by firms and groups of firms (British Non-Ferrous Metals Association, British Cast Iron Research Association, Metropolitan-Vickers) and so on.

The extent to which any of these libraries can be made available to the general public, through the public library organization, must depend not only upon their goodwill but upon such considerations as the means of support, the requirements of those for whom they are primarily intended, the extent to which information arising from private research is "private property", the conditions imposed by endowments or membership, and so on. Frankly, those who have maintained libraries in their own interests and at their own expense cannot be expected easily to extend hospitality to non-contributors when this very act may tend to diminish support from potential contributors. The surprising and inspiring reality, however, is that very many of these libraries, of all types, have already agreed to co-operate with the N.C.L. and the Regional Bureaux, while local librarians have in many places established sound relationships by demonstrating that public, university and special libraries concerned in local industrial matters are of joint benefit to those concerned. We may well seek closer contacts especially with those maintained either directly or indirectly by government grants when we ourselves become allied to a government department.

These two methods of alliance suggest what may be the most fruitful lines for the future—firstly, a further linking up of non-public libraries with the N.C.L. and secondly, a collaboration between the special departments of the public library units and the non-public libraries working in their fields, a collaboration which will be of mutual benefit, as our unit special libraries will be able to give help as well as receive it.

There is pressing need for a thorough and realistic survey of the whole field of special and non-public libraries. Those who undertook the task would find it even more difficult and confusing than any survey of public libraries, for the latter, at least, are all provided by similar authorities. Such a survey would disclose a vast wealth of material which is not fully recognized and utilized, it would stimulate co-operation both between non-public libraries themselves and between non-public and public libraries. But it would also disclose deficiencies in some quarters, inefficient methods and unsatisfactory staffing resulting from failure to recognize the need for men and women with suitable professional and other qualifications or to attract them to the work. The resultant report would surely do much to benefit the various responsible bodies and their staffs; it is a necessary preliminary to a sound organization and development of the specialized resources of the nation.

### THE NATIONAL CENTRAL LIBRARY

The National Central Library is the keystone of all inter-library co-operative efforts. For the proper development of the national library service of the future its position must be strengthened and clarified.

The National Central Library of tomorrow would seem to have these functions :

(a) to supply to library units specialized books which it is impossible or undesirable for the units to provide themselves. It would do this usually by arranging loans from other units and only rarely by providing from its own stock, because (i) when books are not available at unit libraries and must be obtained specially they are surely best housed thereafter in some library to which readers have direct access and (ii) when a book is in sufficient demand to justify its provision solely for inter-loan purposes there is clearly a case for its provision in not one but several unit libraries. There should, in general, be no inter-unit borrowing of ordinary material—only of genuinely specialized material or of out-of-print books ;

(b) to maintain such an organization, including *appropriate* union catalogues, as is necessary for this inter-lending ;

(c) to develop and maintain co-operation between public libraries and non-public libraries of all kinds ;

(d) to encourage and co-ordinate the development of the special libraries already discussed ;

(e) to act as a national centre for bibliographical information ;

(f) to act as a Central Cataloguing Department (see later) ;

(g) to organize international loans and to act as a centre and clearing house for bibliographical information regarding the literature of foreign countries.

The N.C.L. is already doing many of these things—and doing them extremely well having regard to the limitations from which it is suffering. These limitations are twofold. On the one hand it is now being called upon to do things which it should not have to do. Many of the requests with which it has now to deal are for books which should be in the local stocks of all well-organized units ; while lack of proper bibliographical resources at the local libraries causes a great deal of unnecessary work at the N.C.L. On the other hand its financial basis is insecure, inadequate and unworthy of so vital and excellent a service. Undoubtedly the N.C.L. should be supported entirely by government grants made by the Appropriate Body. For the three or four years preceding the war it received a Treasury grant of £5,000 per annum, equivalent to about 40 per cent of its normal annual expenditure ; since the war this amount has been reduced (to £3,500 for the year 1940-1) “as the Government had found it imperative to review every branch of State expenditure on services not directly concerned with the war effort”—a conclusion curiously at variance with the action of the many local library authorities who have *increased* library expenditure since the war. Over half of the total funds of the N.C.L. since its beginning have come from the C.U.K.T. ; other considerable grants have been made by the Rockefeller Foundation, the Thomas Wall Trust, the Cassel Trust and other similar bodies. About 11 per cent of the total has been derived from subscriptions from libraries. These subscriptions (like the contributions of libraries to their Regional schemes) bear no direct relation to the use the libraries make of the services of the N.C.L. The position of an institution which relies upon a combination of grants from trusts, inadequate and undependable Treasury contributions and small subscriptions from libraries is not an enviable one. The Trusts, particularly the C.U.K.T., have been generous and we owe them a great deal, but as it is no part of the function of such bodies to undertake the permanent maintenance of any institution, that source of income is inevitably precarious. We must view with admiration the work performed by the N.C.L. under these conditions, but we cannot be satisfied until it is recognized as an integral part of the national system and

guaranteed a reasonable permanent means of existence and the wherewithal to plan for the future and for whatever developments the well-being of the country demands.

We see the N.C.L. of the future, therefore, primarily as a clearing house and centre for the execution of national library projects—cataloguing, bibliography, and co-operation. The development of good library units throughout the country will help to define and limit its obligations. It should not then, for example, act as a storehouse of reserve stocks, as these would be preserved by the units and the regional reference libraries. There should also be a considerable reduction in its work for adult classes as the units would be in a position to provide more and could, by co-operation *via* the N.C.L., help one another more.

As for union catalogues—on the one hand it would of course take over everything that is still appropriate that is now being done by the Regional Bureaux which would then cease; on the other hand it would be relieved of some of its work as the new special libraries were developed. Work will also be reduced as units co-ordinate and weed out the stocks of the various constituent libraries. Union cataloguing would, indeed, be put on a new basis entirely, the present striving after completeness giving way to a policy of limitation to essential matters.

Let us review this question. Frankly, in the interests of readers we want to limit inter-library loans to things which the local library need not be expected to possess. So long as many of our libraries are small and poor, we cannot draw a line between what should be borrowed and what should be bought. With the unit system we can. We can do so in two ways. (i) If we have the published catalogues of new and standard books which we shall describe shortly, all items therein which are not appropriate for inter-library loan can be marked; no library will send in to the N.C.L. entries for these books, neither will they ask for them—if they have not got them they must get them. Intelligent application of this principle would reduce union cataloguing and inter-lending (so far as new books are concerned) by half or more. (ii) Failing these lists we could fix a fairly high price limit, books costing less not to be included in the cataloguing or lending schemes, but bought. The justification for this is that the cost of inter-library lending and union cataloguing is high, and it is often much cheaper to buy a book than to borrow it—and so long as libraries have reasonable book funds there is no reason why they should not do so.

But in time the ordinary, easily obtainable books will become out-of-print and many copies will be discarded. What then? Could we not devise a simple system for dealing with reserve stocks on the basis of a division of labour? In the first place it would be natural for all special libraries in units to collect all the items on their own subjects and keep them in a special reserve. The duty of preserving other books could be divided. Probably it would be wise to arrange for every item to be preserved in, say, two or three different places. If the latter, we could divide the field into about 30 easily defined, even arbitrary divisions, allocating each division to three units. Each unit would keep everything in its division. If it no longer wanted to keep a book in another division it would, before discarding it, offer it to the appropriate unit, and send it there if it was not already in stock. Thus we should build up a national reserve stock (in triplicate), each unit bearing its share of the work of preservation. The scheme would work in this way: Unit 1 has an unwanted copy of a book on Asia. The allocation list shows that Unit 6 collects books on Asia. Unit 1 sends a form card to Unit 6 offering the book; Unit 6 has no copy, so it accepts. On some later occasion Unit 5 wants this particular book; without consulting any catalogues or looking anywhere else, it applies first to Unit 6 because it knows that there is every likelihood that Unit 6 will have a copy. If it had not, then Unit 6 would pass on the application to the N.C.L. Naturally this system would not be completely watertight; there would be occasions when books were not thus obtainable.

If, as would be possible, these were not in the N.C.L. Union Catalogue, lists could be circulated as is now done in the North-western Regional scheme. Such cases would, however, be a fast diminishing quantity. Surely this is a simpler and more economical system than the present. Moreover it provides—as we do not now provide—for the preservation of books. It is quite easy under the present system for *all* copies of a book to be destroyed.

So we have two types of books: (a) those which should normally be available locally when new and which will go into allocated reserves when old and which will never be union catalogued and (b) less general material which *will* be union catalogued. This material may also go into allocated reserve when the holding library no longer needs it, in which case the union catalogue entry would be altered accordingly. The N.C.L. again should either pass on to all special libraries their own section of the union catalogue or give them duplicate entries.

We can now see the complete lay-out:

- (i) at the N.C.L. a union catalogue of the non-general holdings of all units and of all "outliers";
- (ii) at each special library a union catalogue of non-general books in its field, *plus* a collection of actual books, including its allocated subject reserve;
- (iii) at each unit its own stock, general and non-general, *plus* its part of the allocated reserve.

Suppose a book is wanted by a reader. (a) If it is a general, obtainable book not in the unit's stock the unit buys it; (b) if it is a general but non-obtainable book, the reader's unit applies to the unit with the appropriate allocated reserve; (c) if it is non-general, application may be made either direct to the N.C.L. or first to the appropriate special library.

This is perhaps only one way of several by which the problems of inter-library co-operation may be solved. Naturally the matter calls for full investigation. The important point is that we should not be satisfied with our present system which has proved to be cumbersome, wasteful and affording no inducement to the acquisition and preservation of books or to the formation of special collections.

#### CENTRAL CATALOGUING

An efficient national organization for central cataloguing is not only necessary for efficiency; it will in the long run prove a considerable economy. As already noted, only a few of the catalogues provided by individual libraries serve any purpose beyond that of an index or finding list; many are inadequate even as such. Yet, if every library were instead producing a good catalogue, the case for central cataloguing would be even stronger as the waste of effort it would obviate would also be greater. In the preparation of a good catalogue one must employ experienced and qualified staff—which most libraries do not possess—and the operation involves more expenditure of time than most libraries can afford. The overriding fact is, however, that whereas now some hundreds of persons may catalogue any given book, more or less satisfactorily, one person could quite well catalogue it once and for all. The time-worn argument that cataloguing is part of the education of the library assistant who thereby is helped to keep in touch with the output of books is completely fallacious. Where the cataloguing is good enough to be "educative" it is almost invariably done by two or three specialists who, by spending their time mostly if not entirely on cataloguing, are precisely those who have least contact with the public so that their knowledge of books is not made fully useful to readers. Undoubtedly the assistants—*all* the assistants—who are in touch with readers, should have facilities for securing a knowledge of books. Just as there are many people who can drive a car who could not make one, so we can teach our staff to use catalogues without insisting that they should be cataloguers.

Proposals for central cataloguing have exercised the minds of librarians for

many years. The 1927 Report strongly advocated the central issue of printed cards similar to the Library of Congress scheme.

The present writer is not convinced, however, that the printed card is the beginning and end of central cataloguing. On the contrary he believes that it is putting the cart before the horse. Printed cards have a place in the scheme of things; we should benefit if they were available; but we could meet our primary requirements without them.

Our primary needs are for bibliographical information and for cataloguing information.

To return to an earlier thesis. Once libraries are properly co-ordinated—indeed even now when they are not—it is surely more important for a reader or an assistant to know about the books his particular library does *not* possess than about those it does. Provided a shelf index or the index to classification schedules enables him to find them on the shelves, the reader does not need any full descriptive catalogue of the books that are there as he can see them for himself. The catalogue begins to be useful (as a catalogue and not as a finding list) when the books are “out”. From a study of the entries, if they are full and descriptive, he can discover which of the missing books would be useful and, perhaps, ask for them to be “reserved”. There the present catalogue ends its usefulness. It tells that little bit of the whole story and no more. If it is at a branch it does not tell what books there are to be obtained from or seen at the central library; if at a central library it does not indicate the books that can be obtained from other libraries. That, however, is one of the great values of library co-ordination and co-operation—that thereby the reader is not limited to local provision but enabled to draw on the resources of the nation. This can be done after a fashion without catalogues. The reader can ask for books to be obtained for him, as it were “on spec”; his request is transmitted to a larger unit, a regional bureau or the N.C.L. and material can be sent which will meet his needs more or less well according to the accuracy and detail with which the reader can foresee and describe his requirements. But if he had access to a comprehensive annotated bibliography he could usually do much better by finding therein the most likely books and learning about others which would help him. This would lead to greater satisfaction and saving of time and energy. A great many bibliographies already exist but they are limited, partial, often out of date, and giving inadequate data. A large bibliographical library quite beyond the possibilities of any but the largest libraries would still present innumerable gaps.

Truly comprehensive bibliographical publications are of course out of the question, but much could be achieved by a happy medium. This work could be undertaken progressively.

Let us consider first those current publications to which, in any case, any scheme for printed cards would at first have to be limited. A new book is catalogued. A printed card scheme would provide cards for those libraries (and departments and branches) which had copies, and no others. Clearly the labour, space and expense involved would preclude any library from obtaining and filing cards for the books it did *not* possess. Instead, we strongly advocate the publication, in handy pamphlet form, of a weekly list of new books for each of which a fully and suitably catalogued entry would be given. The labour of cataloguing would be the same. The issue of cards would not be precluded but facilitated—as a secondary process. Every library, even every branch, could have copies of this list and the cost, distributed over such a wide circulation, would be small—very much smaller than the cost of individual cataloguing. The lists would be cumulated monthly, quarterly and annually and eventually consolidated into subject sections covering longer periods. The lists would not include fiction or juvenile books\* or any items which were patently unworthy or unsuitable for library purposes; they should contain most other publications.

\* Which might well be treated separately.

Next—or simultaneously—we could embark upon the publication of bibliographies, each dealing with a subject field capable of treatment in a convenient small quarto volume (we do not want such clumsy lectern pieces as some American publications). These would aim at being reasonably comprehensive of literature still of some general importance issued prior to the first lists of current books; they would be brought up to date from time to time. According to how energetically we pursued the project, sooner or later every fair-sized branch and other library would display on three or four shelves a body of bibliographical guidance of inestimable influence upon the better and fuller use of libraries and their stocks. It would cost no more than present methods but the results would be of quite a different order.

How far would this, however, meet the needs of the cataloguer and take the place of the catalogue? There are various answers. Perhaps the library decides (in addition to providing the published lists) to continue its catalogue in its present style, be it card or sheaf or what not. In that case the technical work of cataloguing has been done; the list gives all the necessary data—form of heading, classification number, annotation, etc. The utilization of this information is thus a routine mechanical matter. It can be copied in whatever form local conditions require; it can be adapted to suit local codes and practice—if we have not yet achieved uniformity. Though we do not like the idea, a library could cut out and paste up the entries. Perhaps, on the other hand, it may (for example at branches) be content to mark up the printed copies, confining its own catalogue to items which were not in the printed lists. Every library will, of course, have much material—foreign or older or highly specialized items—which it must catalogue for itself. There is in fact no suggestion that the lists could possibly completely supersede the local catalogue. They would, however, reduce the work of cataloguing, provide much of the information needed by the cataloguer, and ensure the wide dissemination of essential bibliographical knowledge.

It is with such a project that any scheme for the issue of printed cards or slips should be coupled. Such a dual project is strongly recommended. The deficiencies of a scheme confined to the issue of cards would be avoided. The cost of issuing the cards would be reduced. As the entries in the lists could be numbered, the ordering of cards would be facilitated. The prompt issue of the lists would minimize the disadvantage of any slight delay there might be in the issue of the cards.

The lists must, of course, be published promptly; they could even be available prior to the publication of the books and thus provide librarians with guides for the selection of purchases. This is not an impossible proposal. Publishers should be required to send to the Central Cataloguing Office, as soon as they are able, page proofs of all books about to be published. It would obviously be to the publishers' advantage to secure this publicity for their wares, especially as many librarians would buy largely from the lists. Nevertheless, it would be an easy matter to regularize the procedure and ensure completeness by a clause in the Libraries Act which must ensue for the achievement of our many aims.

The Central Cataloguing Office should of course be associated with the N.C.L. The proof copies should be retained—partly because the cost of returning them to the publishers would not be worth incurring; partly because the cataloguers might on occasion need to refer to previous items so as to secure consistency. But the proof copies should not be circulated or in any way used as books—at least for a period of several years.

These joint projects have many possibilities. For example, each copy of a list could have a tear-out sheet which could be used both as an order form for printed catalogue cards and as an order form for the books themselves.

Clearly it is not possible to estimate the cost of these services or the amount each library would need to expend to secure their advantages. Many details



require full consideration. A committee of the Library Association should be appointed to investigate. Undoubtedly the library movement could justifiably seek a grant for the cost of starting and establishing the service either from the Appropriate Body or perhaps from another source interested in our work.

The work of the Central Cataloguing Office would not be confined to the issue of current and basic lists and catalogue cards. There are other types of cognate assistance to readers that could well be associated with the Office. In this work it would be assisted by representative members of the profession at large. For example, if we are to provide sound stocks for our children's departments, the procedure of publishing carefully selected lists which has already been adopted in a few library systems should become national. Such a list as that issued by Derby County, for example, would be valuable everywhere in the country. And, good though it undoubtedly is, it might be still better if in its compilation the views of other experts were incorporated. Derby County—and other libraries as well—also publishes valuable handlists, leaflets and pamphlets designed to encourage borrowers to read more widely and to tell those who use small service points something of the wider resources at their command. Often the distribution of the list at a branch is accompanied by display of the books listed. These lists can do for the more general reader what the basic lists will do for the more specialized or more serious. Everything that is good at one place is likely to be good anywhere else. At present such useful and interesting guides are invariably lacking where they would be most useful. By pooling our resources, ideas and knowledge, the whole system can be enriched.

#### CENTRAL BOOK PURCHASING

Central book purchasing schemes have often been proposed by librarians who, keen to increase their limited spending power to the utmost, hope that thereby the cost of books to public libraries might be reduced.

They argue that the present system by which books are purchased through ordinary retail channels may often award the bookseller a profit out of proportion to the services he renders, which services are necessarily less than are involved in private sales to individuals. Moreover they thereby contribute to the overhead costs of a retailer who, in their opinion, is not for their purposes a necessary element. Though the present Library Licence scheme does in fact give libraries preferential treatment they suggest that this is not sufficient. The bookseller, also, has to take no risks nor exercise any initiative in his dealings with the libraries. They recognize that, though the many orders for single copies from any one library do not constitute wholesale transactions, the combined orders of many libraries would. Furthermore they believe that by uniting and consolidating the orders of many libraries they would be able to exercise a more direct and effective influence over such matters as price, format and quality.

If in fact the library authorities could establish a central Book Purchasing Department which could supply all libraries more quickly and efficiently, if the publishers could be induced to recognize it as a "wholesaler" and if it could operate on overheads low enough to enable it to retail at less than the present booksellers' charges (allowing for the Library Licence discount) the case would be a strong one, though not entirely unanswerable. We should need to make a close investigation before we could decide the practical financial issue. The Department would need some premises and staff; there would be transport costs. Would the Department order in advance of demands and carry stocks—in which case it would need to allow a sum for non-sales? If it did not, could it secure full wholesale terms? If it did not, would it employ collectors? Or would it purchase, at a margin, from existing wholesalers? Viewed from another angle—would the publishers be willing thus to undermine the booksellers who would still be one of their chief markets? Would it be just and wise to ask them to do so? Bookselling is at best a precarious trade. Admittedly we are primarily

concerned with libraries and not with booksellers—but is a bookshop an asset to the community or is it not? Is private book-buying a thing to be encouraged or not? We must surely ask these questions.

There are, however, even wider issues. We have already asserted the value of the library as an instrument in securing the full range of intellectual opportunity. We can achieve this only if we help—and not hinder—the publication and sale of the widest variety of books for all types of reader. Is it unreasonable to fear that an effective scheme for Central Book Purchasing might have the opposite effect, that it might indeed tend to canalize and standardize book provision in libraries themselves? How could this be? Surely the wider the market for which a publisher caters the wider will be his output. Once the library becomes a dominant element, with a consequent decline in private bookselling, the library becomes in danger of dictating the markets—of encouraging the things it wants and discouraging those it does not. If Librarianship is wise, need this matter? Perhaps not—but why take the risk? Once the Department becomes a commercial—if public—proposition, in need of justifying its existence by giving financial benefits to its constituents, it becomes liable to prefer the large orders and “safe” items which it can handle most cheaply—and therein lies the road to standardization. And it is not unlikely that by refusing or withholding its support of a projected book it may effectively prevent its publication—which would be a denial of everything that librarianship stands for.

The future of the book trade is itself, however, somewhat uncertain. Its pre-war organization and resources have suffered severely as a result of enemy action; wartime limitations of supply and labour are creating a serious strain, the effects of which will not end with the war. We hope that the trade will emerge capable of meeting the deficiencies of the war period and of facing the expansion of healthy activity which must be demanded in the new world. Our own well-being is linked up with the state of the book trade. It behoves us, therefore, to preserve an open mind regarding our future relationships. Only one thing is certain—the interests of the country require that we should co-operate in every possible way.

This co-operation is not only a matter of business relationships. There was room before the war for some type of joint consultative committee charged with the task of stimulating the creation and publication of books that were wanted but which did not exist. These are far more numerous than is commonly imagined. No up-to-date books are obtainable on many important aspects of science and scholarship; of several nations no histories or topographies have been published for many years. To give but one example: a few years ago, the writer, after very brief consideration, was able to compile a long list of desiderata in the one field of musical literature. In addition, many useful and important books have been allowed to go out of print. Moreover, there is room for an increasing proportion of books in which the style and method of presentation are adapted to the reading abilities of various sections of the public. Librarians can not only disclose such needs, they can help to make publication practicable. Only when we have filled up all the gaps can we give a full service to our readers. Important though this was before the war, it becomes a vital task for post-war years, for we now have to correct both the old deficiencies and the new ones caused by war limitations. Here is a great piece of work—the strengthening and renewal of our national heritage—one worthy of our best thought and enthusiasm and one for which we are fitted, as we should know, better than others, the needs of the reading public, both general and specialized.

#### CENTRAL SUPPLIES DEPARTMENT

Occasionally it is suggested that an organization should be set up for providing nationally for libraries various supplies, fittings, stationery and the like which are of a standardized character, usable in all parts of the country. We do not view

this proposal with favour. If there is sufficient demand for any article, competing commercial firms will in normal times ensure adequate supplies at reasonable costs. If we attempted to establish our own organization we should still have to deal with competing markets for raw materials and manufactured products and it is unlikely that the saving due to large buying would compensate for the distribution costs in which we should be involved. We have already noted complaints that even local authority central purchasing departments cause delays, inefficiency, and compel acceptance of less suitable articles than the librarian could secure in the open market. Above all, we must avoid tendencies towards undesirable types of standardization and a desire for "cheapness" at the expense of quality, taste and pleasing variety.

This does not, of course, mean that we should not ourselves examine various types and qualities of commodity with a view to finding, and recommending to our fellows, the most suitable and efficient. The Library Association might advantageously appoint a Standing Advisory Committee to assist in this way.

## STAFF—RECRUITMENT, TRAINING, GRADING, SALARIES

The value of library provision will depend almost entirely upon the ability and suitability of library staff. In all but such general matters as fall to the share of the library authority, the staff are responsible for determining in every detail what shall be provided and for performing every process involved in making it available and useful. What is less generally recognized, however, is that though the staff make the service, the service helps to make the staff—that, though libraries can develop on sound useful lines only if manned by good librarians and assistants, it is no less true that only in good libraries can the latter exist, fully utilizing and developing their abilities. In other words, conditions must be such as to attract the right material, to give it the necessary technical education, professional experience and opportunities for development in other desirable and non-professional ways, and to offer it the satisfaction of being able to do its work thoroughly and completely in an environment as free as possible from unnecessary limitations and frustrations. These vital factors—inducements, qualifications and opportunities—are interrelated and cannot be considered independently. Inducements imply qualification; and the inducements are vain if they do not include the personal appeal of a job worth doing, and useless if there is no opportunity to utilize the qualifications.

Before we can consider any of these three factors we must clearly appreciate the personnel requirements of the library service. So long as the country is served by a multitude of unorganized authorities, in very varying stages of development, it is difficult to do this—so difficult that it is scarcely to be wondered at that no serious effort has yet been made to see some hidden order in the apparent chaos. We cannot say that to put our staffing system in order we must first put our library service in order, because we need the staff, employed and trained with that objective, to secure the second of these two conditions. But at least we must understand and plan the service on sound lines before we can try to secure the staff to make it operate. That is why this chapter has been deliberately deferred until we have been able to consider the proposed plan of future library organization. The present library lay-out is not conducive to good staffing; on the contrary, save in a few well-organized libraries there is no semblance of any intelligent solution of personnel problems. How can a library that is in every way bad and backward appreciate or use good staff? How can the very small place utilize fully the services of any but one or two who are not in the lower grades? How can a poverty stricken authority, or one that cries poverty, attract adequate people? How can an unco-ordinated service co-ordinate the functions and abilities of its employees?

Once we have a nation-wide plan for libraries the position is quite different. No longer need we speak in generalities or pious hopes; we can point to duties to be done and services to be rendered.

If we take one of the proposed library units it is not difficult to see the types of people we need and to calculate the numbers of each type required. Our specimen unit comprises a large county area partly rural, partly mining and industrial, with one large city as its hub, four or five subsidiary centres in small or medium-sized towns also acting as regional libraries, a number of small townships with district branches and a network of smaller part-time branches and centres linked together by interchanges of stock, by travelling libraries and vans. The centres will only rely partly upon voluntary assistants; most will be manned by itinerant assistants, operating from district or regional branches, each of which will be responsible for the centres in its district. Other thinly populated areas

will be served by assistants manning the travelling libraries operating from each of the regional branches or area libraries. The smaller district libraries will each be in charge of a qualified branch librarian with one or more assistants; if they are full-time, probably at least one other person should be qualified so as to ensure that there will always be present someone capable of helping readers and supervising the work. At the larger branches and regional branches there will be more assistants, some qualified, some performing the routine tasks. The libraries in the larger subsidiary towns will retain most of the functions of the present independent medium library of today and will have acquired new functions; they will need a capable experienced chief, his deputy or chief assistant, senior men and women responsible for reference and circulation work and work with children. At the main large centre of population there will be, as now, only it will be better, a comprehensive central library and reference department with well-qualified and experienced persons in charge of adequate staff; there will probably be some special departments. Finally, concerned with all the libraries in the unit, there will be a headquarters staff responsible for the general administration, finance, staffing and maintenance, for the selection, purchase, cataloguing and processing, transfer and distribution of stock. In all departments of this work there will be senior officers (such as a Supervisor of Branches, a Secretary or Treasurer, a Head of the Accessions and Cataloguing Department), and officers in charge of work with children, of special projects, etc. Each of these will have his departmental assistants—transport officer, chief cataloguer, etc., and each will have his professional and routine-work assistants. In charge of all will be the Unit Librarian and his deputy.

This, with extensions and modifications, will be the staff lay-out of each unit. Always there will be certain fundamental features: (a) a relatively large staff—never comprising less than 70, perhaps amounting to three or four hundred—providing very considerable opportunities for promotion, interchange, and variety of experience, (b) a reasonable proportion of really senior posts requiring high personal qualities and technical abilities and carrying commensurate rewards, (c) a number of posts calling for specialized abilities and qualifications to which those most suitable will be attracted, (d) a considerable body of men and women who are in immediate contact with the general public whom they must be able to advise and help from their wide knowledge of books, their full appreciation of the facilities afforded by the system, their broad general culture and educational background and their sympathy with and understanding of readers, (e) a large number of people, intelligent, willing and well informed who can perform the everyday routine tasks—counter work, helping to keep books in order, keeping records, processing books, dealing with the routine of branch and centre exchanges, typing, filing, packing, sorting and a hundred similar duties.

There will be need, in fact, for four categories of personnel—the higher administrative and executive officers, the subject-specialists, the general professional staff, and the non-professional staff. The first three may be grouped together as “professional” because, though there will be a sorting out on the basis of special qualifications and abilities, the first two categories will emerge, with a few exceptions, from the third; they are all of the same type, could well start their library careers with the same initial educational background and enjoy the same basic training and experience. This is not true of the fourth category—at least not *necessarily* true. This principle of the division of library personnel into professional and non-professional is very widely accepted in theory though, in this country, hardly ever applied in practice—for which discrepancy between theory and practice the present irrational lay-out is responsible. The point need not be laboured. In every active library there is work which can only be done by persons with appropriate knowledge, skill, experience and personality of such quality that we may term their work “professional”; there is also work which can be done by people with a less developed equipment, with indeed just such

general knowledge, common sense and aptitude as is commonly demanded in a variety of occupations which we should not call, or grade as, professional. In the small ill-organized or badly staffed library one finds either that professional people waste their abilities doing non-professional work, or that non-professionals are attempting, unsuccessfully, to do professional work. That is what is happening every day in most British libraries.

There are several most important reasons for insisting upon this division.

(1) So long as there are duties which can be satisfactorily performed by non-professionals it is stupid, dishonest and prejudicial to the genuine professional man to suggest that *all* library work is professional.

(2) If we claim that professional work is worthy of higher rewards (at least in the course of time for each individual) we thereby assert that non-professional work can be obtained, to the satisfaction of both employer and employee, at lower rates. If this is so—and undoubtedly it is—we are wrong to pay either more than we legitimately need to non-professionals or less than we should to professionals.

(3) At present—with few exceptions—we work upon the assumption that all start at the bottom of the ladder but some achieve professionalism or have it thrust upon them, whereas some are less fortunate. This is grossly unfair to the less fortunate majority for whom, however capable they may be, there are insufficient opportunities. Half of those who enter (even assuming that our so-called professionals were adequately rewarded) are foredoomed to disappointment. Fortunately many enter with their eyes open, conscious that they will never be more than non-professional, and, unless they are harried by the mistaken zeal of librarians and authorities, they do not attempt to qualify. Others do and, because they are ill-equipped, fail; others succeed but find no opening for advancement. Thus we breed discontent, disappointment, wasted effort and inefficiency. Frankly the position is senseless and indefensible.

(4) Lastly, our present system assumes that the initial educational background appropriate for the non-professional is good enough for the potential professional, that all he needs above and beyond this he can gain by “experience” in routine tasks and by correspondence courses. Have we any right to suppose that we would not obtain more of a better type of professional worker if we sought to recruit not from school leavers, but from graduates or those who have stayed at school to take the Higher Schools Examination, or even more mature people who have had experience in some other professional or commercial career? Surely professional librarianship needs all the benefits that facilities for higher education can give it. There are at present two barriers preventing this—one, that librarianship is not able to offer sufficient to compete with other occupations demanding higher educational standards (a matter we must rectify); the other is our failure to distinguish between professional and non-professional.

What is the dividing line between professional and non-professional? How can we relate the division to the realities of library conditions? The dividing line cannot always be very rigid, perhaps, but in a large system it can be quite clear and evident. Some of the duties that will fall to the non-professional have already been indicated. Two objections are frequently raised. First, we may say that counter-work is non-professional, but many borrowers are in the habit of asking help from those they meet at the counter. The answer is that they do so now because usually there is no one else they can ask—that counter work and genuine “reader-assistance” should and can be divorced (in the newly planned library the counter might well be kept outside the actual book room, as is done in some American libraries). Secondly, what about the small library where there are only one or two assistants available? Should these not be professional? Yes—readers should always have direct access to a professional worker. In such cases it may be necessary for professionals to do some non-professional work as well. We must accept that. The dividing line, as before said, cannot be rigid.

It will do no harm for a non-professional to be so interested in his work that he can on occasion help the professional; it has often done a chief, and his staff, good for him on rare occasions to take off his coat and show that he is still capable of shifting books. Such departures do not affect the normal allocation of function.

Is it suggested that there should be a rigid distinction between professionals and non-professionals themselves—that, for example, the non-professional would be debarred from becoming a professional? We think not. It is undesirable that anyone should be prevented from securing advancement if he is capable of deserving it. But such passing from non-professional to professional should ultimately be exceptional. If it were common and usual the division would break down and we might be back where we started. For the next few years we may leave the door ajar; gradually we must close it.

Such, in general terms, is the basis of differentiation. Later we must discuss the motive elements—salaries, recruitment and training. Before doing so, let us consider the classification of the three types of professional workers—those in the higher grades, the specialists and the general grade professional. We say “general grade” because we believe that the best results will accrue if we avoid excessive grading and recognize the need for a class of workers, numerically preponderant, who perform all professional duties save those which involve special responsibilities and qualifications. For these we do not need any complicated grading system; instead we require the maximum freedom of movement and choice of occupation, which will at once ensure for each assistant employment in the kind of work in which he is most suitable and happiest, and give him opportunity to gain wider experience. We would abolish the artificial seniorities of our present system which, by relating salaries and rank to the job and not to the people, lead to much wastage, disappointment and waiting for dead men’s shoes. We think that most professional posts should be regarded as falling within one comprehensive general professional grade and as capable of being filled, according to varying circumstances, by people who were on the same scale, the actual amount they receive being determined not by what precisely they were doing but by their qualifications and seniority. All who are in this grade should be sure of reaching a maximum sufficient to enable them to live reasonably full, decent lives. The scale would not be enough to satisfy the ambitions of people of superior ability; these would thus be tempted to qualify for and obtain posts in the higher grades. But it would be enough to prevent frustration and disappointment, and it should bear a just relationship to what people of comparable ability would obtain in other occupations. It should also offer some compensating rewards for special qualifications and individual work of particular merit for those who are not able or fortunate enough to step into higher grades.

Thus, entrance to the general professional grade would be contingent upon the possession of initial qualifications and the assistant would then proceed, by annual increments, to its maximum. To stimulate continued interest, accelerated increments would be given for higher professional qualifications and for qualifications in non-professional subjects—because professional knowledge is not everything. The practice of librarianship, when it is properly organized, will afford scope for the utilization of knowledge of all manner of things for the benefit of library-using specialists. We want librarians to form, as a whole, a body of men and women competent to appreciate and understand the whole field of knowledge and, as individuals, to develop and exploit their “non-professional” interests. For these abilities, over and above the entrance minima, we should afford recognition. Increments awarded in this way should carry the recipients to an appropriate amount *above* the normal scale maxima.

From those who obtain these higher qualifications we shall select the personnel for special branches of library work and the higher posts of responsibility. These posts will be paid salaries above the normal professional grades—and the people who deserve them will get them regardless of seniority. Thus, also, shall we

avoid the greatest danger librarianship can face—that it should become narrow. It is not for us to suggest that other professions have succumbed to this danger; maybe we could, with some justification. The essential purposes of librarianship demand that we should not do likewise. Our libraries tomorrow must be guided by broad-minded capable administrators. We believe that such men, given the opportunity, can emerge from the ranks of professional librarianship. If we are wrong—or fail to provide the opportunities—either the direction of libraries will pass into the hands of others, which we know would be undesirable though a few American straws show the way the wind is there blowing, or we shall have ineffective libraries. We want neither. Would it be libellous to say that many of our present discontents arise from the fact that often we have neither librarians nor administrators, sometimes we have those who are too much librarian and occasionally those who are too little librarian? Yet here we should remind ourselves of the thought with which this chapter was started—that only in good libraries can good librarians exist, fully utilizing and developing their abilities—for this is as true of yesterday as it will be of tomorrow. To an extent we shall never be able to estimate, the defects of librarians now and in the past are attributable to the conditions in which they have had to work. There have been fortunate men who have had opportunities and taken them; and men who have made opportunities. There are others who have had their energies and enthusiasm gradually sapped by disappointment, apathy, frustration and limitation; and those who have continued patiently to work on though the only tools they were given were blunt and the material shoddy. Thus, though all good libraries have, or have had, good librarians, all good librarians have not had good libraries. Not a few of our best men are hard at work keeping mediocre systems from becoming worse; for this they get little praise and no limelight. One can readily perceive success; it is not so easy to distinguish between the man whose work would be more successful if he had more ability and more desire, and the man who is being compelled by circumstances to devote, to a task that still remains incomplete, far finer personal qualities and qualifications than some of his successful colleagues. These men and women are not being forgotten when libraries are being adversely criticized. For myself I would not care to face the tasks confronting many of the librarians I have met in my survey; it would ill become me not to admire their courage, devotion and faith. When the time comes there will be enough sound capable people to direct libraries in the difficult days of post-war development. This belief does not remove the need to continue and increase the supply of good librarians; equally we cannot face that task with sincerity if we do not also resolve to remove the factors that militate against the full use of their qualities. That is the great inducement and reward of library work.

Non-professional and professional scales will, of course, overlap to some extent—since the maximum of one is a final adult wage and the minimum of the other the beginning which the young man or woman can make into what he may. This is just and reasonable and in a well-organized system should create no difficulties.

Salaries at present are far too low and far too varied—and the variations bear little relation to the degree of responsibility, the qualifications needed or the size or financial ability of authorities. A sound salaries system should satisfy four requirements—it should be just, giving adequate rewards and equal rewards for equal services; it should promote reasonable movement from system to system; it should encourage personal development; it should offer a measure of security and predictability.

Widely various scales in different places satisfy none of these criteria. They do not even, as is commonly imagined, really induce movement, for though the poorly paid are encouraged to try and go where they will be better rewarded, the better paid are tempted to stay where they are and consequently the former have fewer vacancies for which it is worth their while to try. It is sad but true



that the authorities which for a period of years have paid better than the average have the higher proportion of "passengers". This is not an argument against good scales; it is an argument in favour of their being general. Low salaries are thus, far from being a cause of movement, the chief obstacle—especially in the junior grades where the next best attainable is still not good enough to cover the cost of living away from home or to justify the cost of moving, selling a house and incurring the various incidental expenses. Neither are relatively high salaries conducive to movement, since they limit the positions for which it is worth moving and for which the individual concerned is yet fitted to apply. This is one of the reasons why many potentially able chief librarians have never found their true sphere. If they have been relatively well paid as senior members of a large staff, they have not been tempted by the salaries attached to the smaller chiefships. Wise men have often made temporary sacrifices to secure their first command, regarding this as a necessary step to something better, but private circumstances may not permit this luxury—or the "something better" may fail to materialize. Therefore, paradoxical though it may appear, we feel that movement from one system to another is more likely to follow when all systems are reasonably comparable. Moreover, with larger units, movements within the unit may, for many, provide adequate variety and experience.

As for security and predictability—admittedly it is bad to create the mentality that views with placid content the slow but steady progression from the minimum of the scale to the maximum, when journey's end is reached. Yet it is surely not bad that a man should be able—perhaps before he enters the career and when he is just assessing its possibilities—to see what he may reasonably expect if he is no luckier or cleverer than the average, especially if there are plenty of "plums" for those who are. There are too many disappointed people in libraries today because, for the want of clear basic expectations, they have set their hopes too high.

All this means that we strongly advocate national scales, applicable to and operative in all library services. Obviously we can only have such scales when we have library units and organized types of library work to which such scales are applicable. The scales must provide for non-professional, general professional and higher professional personnel.

For non-professionals it might at first sight seem appropriate to accept the scales that are paid by local authorities for all other, comparable, types of non-professional service. There are good employers among local authorities just as there are libraries where today reasonable salaries are paid (generally because the library staffs are among the employees of those good employers). Yet, judging by the local scales which in many places library assistants share with their fellow local government employees in other departments, there are too many bad employers. Were sound national scales generally implemented the position would be different; in reality the national local government scales would seem to have little more general reality than the L.A. scales, while local Whitley Council scales on the whole are not impressive. Writing as one responsible for making proposals relative to library staffs, and no others, I cannot honestly be content merely to suggest local parity. For this I have two reasons—the general non-professional salaries paid by most authorities are not good enough to provide the library with the people it wants even for its non-professional work, and it is thus a shirking of responsibility merely to hope that they will become so. Throughout this report a firm face has been set against the wiles of those optimistic or pessimistic people who either fix their faith in inevitable improvements in this, that or the other, or who suggest that it is useless for us to speak for ourselves until we know how others are going to speak for themselves—and presumably us. We have to speak for ourselves and ask for ourselves the things we can justify and which can be made practicable by our own efforts. The second reason is that the L.A. is responsible for the welfare of "all those who are *engaged* in library work". As an officer of the L.A. I share that responsibility.

If existing local government scales are inappropriate, so also are the Board of Education scales for uncertificated teachers, because these are at best the acceptance of things as they were. Those responsible for education do not want uncertificated teachers; they want certificated teachers. So the scales are deliberately and rightly designed to freeze out the inadequately equipped.

We have no alternative therefore but to propose our own scales and seek the support of the Appropriate Body to secure their general adoption. In determining these scales we need to observe a careful balance between the rightful demands of the individual and the economy of the library service. This is not easy. Guided by the first consideration it should be affirmed that every adult person should receive sufficient upon which to maintain a reasonable adult life and perhaps provide a home for wife and children. But the second consideration affords a different picture. Since most of the non-professional work not only *can* be done well by young people but is more appropriate for them than for adults, to pay suitable wages to a high proportion of adults is uneconomical and therefore a tax upon the general efficiency of the library. How can this difficulty best be resolved? One has to be practical even if thereby one risks being criticized for being harsh. There are two ways. One is to encourage the employment of women, *not* because one would suggest differentiation and the employment of "cheap labour", but simply because the percentage of "wastage" (if one may so inaptly use the term) is naturally and desirably greater. Men do not retire on marriage; they merely take unto themselves hostages to fortune which, interpreted, means greater claims to higher wages. Women do usually resign on marriage; though we can see the feminists rising in anger—both for our sakes and theirs the more the better. And we must, of course, safeguard the interests of those who do not marry or retire for other reasons. The other way is to ensure that those who stay will be able to perform work which, while still non-professional, is not just the ordinary routine that any youngster can do—and there *will* be different kinds of non-professional work. This we can do by asking our non-professionals to secure appropriate qualifications. This will not only give them the right to proceed to reasonable maxima; it will also, by showing those who are inefficient and indolent precisely what they may expect, induce some to seek other types of work, and tell the others that they have only themselves to blame. Thus, into our non-professional grade we would introduce a bar based upon *appropriate* qualifications, and, furthermore, we would add as compensation, higher non-professional grades for those of more than average ability. For these there will be suitable posts as senior clerks, transport officers, stores and account clerks, and the like. The adoption of departments to deal with secretarial and financial matters, the maintenance of premises, transport and supplies is strongly advocated, and from the senior officers in these we may well ask appropriate, even professional (but not "library"), qualifications. The proposed lay-out of the library units will probably produce an increase in such work as the amount of direct assistance at present given by local authorities' financial and works' departments diminishes. In any case far too much of the time of librarians and their professional assistants is now spent on non-library matters, for which as librarians they may not even be qualified or fitted. For example, in most libraries the senior officers look after accounts, the innumerable details of repairs, fittings, lighting and fuel, carriage, transport and so on, which duties could be much more economically and efficiently handled by officers chosen for their fitness for this work.

For the "general professionals" (i.e. excluding those senior posts which are above the basic scale) we may find it expedient, appropriate and not unsatisfactory to ask for the scales operative in a comparable profession—the Burnham scales for Elementary School Teachers. Expedient, because as long ago as 1927 a government committee stated "we are of opinion that, in general, the trained librarian should be paid no less than the trained teacher, and that the one profession should not be less attractive than the other". The case has not weakened since

then ; it would be very difficult for either the local authority or the government who jointly pay the salaries of teachers to deny this claim with even an appearance of justice. They are appropriate, because we ask of our professional librarians (and with any improved educational programme will give) education and training of a similar character. They are not unsatisfactory because (from the viewpoint of the assistant) salaries paid to library assistants at present are on the whole definitely below those paid to teachers, yet (from the viewpoint of the authority which would naturally hesitate to support considerable immediate increments), the Burnham scales are not excessively better than the scales already paid to library workers by some authorities—they are in fact scales which, on present evidence, can be justified in the light of “best practice”.

There are three Burnham scales, based upon the type of place in which the teacher would work—the village or small town, the large town, or a school in the London area. This criterion is not altogether suitable for our purposes because most of our units include both rural and urban areas in any of which assistants may work, temporarily or permanently. Therefore we would suggest that the Burnham Scale II is inappropriate, and that Scale III should be applied throughout all units excepting two categories—(a) those in the London area and (b) those which are more or less confined to the very large provincial cities. For category (a) we suggest a 10 per cent increase on the basic scale and for category (b) a 5 per cent increase. One further modification is also recommended. The Burnham scales provide that “the first annual increment shall accrue after two years’ service”. To follow this practice would cause difficulties, as the junior professionals work alongside non-professionals who are already well advanced on a scale in which this pause does not occur. As there is naturally no considerable difference between the professional and non-professional scales for those in their twenties the pause would tend to make the two scales unduly similar.

The equivalent to the “certification” which qualifies teachers for scale payment will be either Associateship of the L.A. as obtained under present conditions or as obtainable in future. This is discussed in detail shortly. Sufficient at the moment to say that ultimately it is hoped that this will involve a two years’ course at a library training school. Graduation will bring the benefit for librarians, as for teachers, of an advanced increment. In place of the additional incremental benefits given to teachers for additional years at a training college we will substitute an increment for Fellowship of the L.A. Moreover, we shall seek yet further recognition of other additional qualifications the nature of, and the reason for, which will be explained a few pages hence.

All teachers are not elementary school class teachers ; and librarianship too has its higher ranks. Teachers of special subjects, secondary school teachers, and head teachers—all these receive more than elementary school teachers. Librarianship has its equivalent posts. It has, indeed, its Directors of Education and its L.E.A. Inspectors. For these we must provide salaries above the professional scale. What these positions are and the salaries it is suggested they should carry will shortly be outlined.

The field from which library workers can be recruited is determined chiefly by the relation between the inducements libraries can offer and those offered by other careers, especially those of such a nature as to appeal to young people with similar temperaments, interests and social and educational backgrounds. This is an economic law ; to ignore it is to invite inadequacy. Thus, above all, we must insist upon reasonable salaries and opportunities which will enable us to compete in the open market. Until we are in this position discussion of the qualities and qualifications needed for librarianship remain academic and relatively futile. That is why in the sequence of this chapter consideration of salaries has preceded that of entrance qualifications. If we can assume that the proposals as to the former are accepted we may then usefully ask ourselves what type of entrant we desire.

For the non-professional grades we should seek young people of at least the same educational standards as are, or should be, recruited for non-professional duties in other departments of local government, i.e. the standard now and for some time past urged by the L.A. for all entrants—evidence of useful secondary education (at present judged by the passing of a school leaving examination or its equivalent). There are indications that the present educational system will be revised and improved after the war; should this result in an extension of facilities for secondary education and in a raising of the leaving age we may well be able to ask for qualifications higher than the present "school leaving" standard. We cannot ask for less. Even though these people will not normally have professional duties, even though in time only very few of the professional staff will be recruited from their ranks (though the door should not be completely closed), they will work in close contact with the public and they will need to be people of intelligence, good general education, good presence and mental alertness.

When we come to consider the entrance qualifications appropriate for the professional library worker surely we can only say that we want the best we can get. No work calls for better or wider educational equipment. Therefore we must, as soon as we can, require that professional entrants should have enjoyed the educational, cultural and personal advantages of attendance at a university. This is an objective we may have to approach gradually—though without taking too long in the process. The war will have produced a shortage of graduates and the effects of this shortage will be increased competition, into which libraries will not be able to enter effectively until improved salaries have become not only general but generally appreciated. Moreover the library service already has its own personnel and of these all who are of professional status must have their own positions improved and secured, and those who are capable of becoming professionals must be given their opportunities. There must be no element of competition or rivalry between the present régime and the future. Present staffs must take their full place in any future arrangements—these, in fact, must be to their benefit and not to their disadvantage.

So our programme exhibits these aspects—the fulfilment of our obligations to existing personnel, the absorption of an increasing proportion of graduate recruits, and interim steps to ensure that meanwhile such non-graduate recruits as we need shall be the best material available. As to this last we would suggest the adoption, as soon as possible after the war, of Higher Schools standard as the minimum entrance qualification for potential professionals.

As the problem presented is not a simple one we must avoid the temptation of seeking artificial simplification—even in this presentation of proposals. Let us first think of what the machinery of recruitment may be in a few years hence and then return to the various complications of the transitional period.

Then we should have a staff consisting largely of present members graded as non-professionals, "scale" professionals and senior professionals. What of recruitment? It would be of three kinds—non-professionals of school leaving standard; graduates; those with Higher Schools; the two last for the professional grades. In addition there would, of course, be frequent appointments, especially for senior posts, of professionals from other systems.

The graduate desirous of entering a library would pass to a library school immediately upon graduation. There he would take a two-year course after which he would start his library career, being placed on the professional scale and awarded the increments due for his qualifications. As the school course would include a considerable amount of practical experience, he would soon find his place in the work of the library. Then he would gain experience, obtain, if he wished, his higher qualification and his future would be in his own keeping.

The position of the entrant from a secondary school (with either School Leaving or Higher Schools certificate) is more difficult. He would first secure a post in a library and until he was old enough to attend the library school he would

work as a non-professional. Meanwhile he would prepare himself for admission to the school. This is where the difficulty arises. We are opposed to oppressive "after work" studies for formal examinations—librarians have all suffered too much from this iniquity. Yet it is agreed with justice that the youngster on leaving school should not, in his own interests, be allowed to lose the habit of study and lie fallow perhaps for two or three years, particularly if he has later to resume his studies. So probably it will be best for him to pursue studies for a general entrance test for a library school, care being taken that the studies are such as he can very reasonably pursue having regard to his duties and that in the main they cover matters of a general humanistic nature which will not be useless and inappropriate if he should fail to pass through the library school or should decide to change his occupation. If he fails to pass through the school he may return to the library as a non-professional, but it might be wiser if he were not encouraged to do so but to turn to other fields—because "disappointeds" are bad things to carry on any staff.

As the supply of graduates and Higher Schools recruits might for a time prove inadequate, there must be simple machinery for drawing into the school the best of the non-professionals. Here lies a danger we must guard against—we do not want to make it frequent or customary for non-professionals to pass into the professional grade, because if we do we shall weaken the grading. Much more important, we shall lead all or most non-professionals to start studying and striving for admission, whether they are suitable or not, and before we realize it we shall be back into the bad old position of expecting the office boy to get his Fellowship. The suggested solution is that those who do well in the examinations for non-professionals (which will shortly be explained) shall be entitled, subject to vacancies, to enter library schools. But clearly this facility, though always existent, will gradually become more and more exceptional.

So much for the new element; what of the old?

When an authority adopts the professional scale it would place in it (apart from those who were awarded senior posts) all existing members of the staff who were on the professional Register as well as others who were holding definitely professional posts. It is a cardinal point that the application of the scales shall not prejudicially affect any existing employee and much as we would wish that all senior persons were on the Register (and a vast majority *are*) we must approach the matter justly and realistically. Local Library Unit committees would be required, at the outset, to submit a scheme for the grading of existing staff, such grading to include placing each person at an appropriate step in the scale. Consideration of this scheme by the unit librarian and an officer of the Appropriate Body would ensure, as far as is humanly possible, both that the individuals are treated fairly and that the grading is consistent with general principles that would relate duties, seniority and qualifications.

The keystone of the new system is a two-year course at a full-time library school, just as the crux of admission to the teachers' scale is attendance at a training college. The library school course will offer instruction and practical training in the general technical elements of librarianship. Essentially a practical course, it will have no room either for subsidiary, ancillary or specialized aspects of librarianship. These will be provided for in other ways. It is unfortunate that for some years the L.A. Intermediate Examination has covered only two somewhat specialized aspects of librarianship instead of general studies to an "intermediate" standard. We cannot, however, undo the errors of the past, while the fact that all Associates have enjoyed at least three years' practical experience ensures that they have some general knowledge of librarianship. So we may reasonably accept the position—though clearly the L.A. syllabus should be revised as speedily as possible so as to avoid the continuance of the present limitations. As an increment (and a step higher maximum) will be awarded to those who secure the Fellowship—and as all appointments to posts in the higher

grades will in time be open only to Fellows, every inducement will exist for present Associates to complete their studies ; so the difficulty will be only temporary.

We do not want librarianship to become either a man's profession or a woman's profession. It can usefully employ both men and women. We certainly do not want it to become a woman's profession simply because women are paid substantially less, and so whatever other view we may hold, wisely or unwisely, we assert the basic principle of equal pay for equal work. Yet if we adopt Burnham scales in general we must adopt such sex differentiation as they contain—for if we try to fight the battle for equality in librarianship we shall embroil ourselves in the much bigger battle of equality in the teaching profession—which Heaven forfend. Accepting the scale differentiation, we must, on the one hand, hope that women librarians will be content in that the scales bring real if not relative benefit and, on the other hand, provide necessary safeguards against the feminization of the profession. This is important because we do need men, especially in the senior positions (not *all* men, but a proper proportion), and since the senior posts will be filled by those who have risen from the general professional grade because of their ability we must have an adequate proportion of men in that grade. One cannot have cream without milk. The simplest and fairest method is control at the initial stage of admission to the library Schools. For a period of years, at least, it should be a general principle to aim at an equal number of men and women students.

The higher positions will be filled by selection from the "scale" professionals. Often there will be suitable people on the staff of the unit concerned. Nevertheless we shall promote efficiency and equality of opportunity if we make it a rule that all such appointments should be publicly advertised and open to all qualified applicants.

We can consider now our system of examinations : (1) for non-professional, (2) for professionals, and (3) extra-professional qualifications.

(1) *Non-professionals*. Why should we ask our non-professionals to pass any examination? For several reasons—because an early examination will help to weed out the unsuitable people, because incentives are good, because we do need even non-professionals to know certain appropriate things, because it is a means by which we can limit the payment of the inadequate and reward the better. In settling the kind of examination we must be guided by consideration of what abilities we want to promote and test, and by a determination that the preparation for examination shall not be unduly burdensome. A programme of four sections is suggested. Those who satisfy the requirements of all four sections will be able to proceed to the non-professional grade maximum, those who satisfy three stay one stage short of the maximum, those who do not satisfy any cannot complain if they stay four stages behind the maximum. Sections one and two will be tested by single examinations, to be held by the Library Association. The unit will arrange for necessary tuition. One or other should be taken within three years of entrance to the library. Those who fail badly will be liable to discharge. It is immaterial which is taken first.

Section One will comprise an examination in simple arithmetic, handwriting, general knowledge, the elements of bookkeeping, including the checking of accounts, discounts, etc., filing and similar elements of business routine. For Section Two candidates will be expected to have a general idea of the organization of the library system, how it is governed, financed, and administered, some knowledge of simple reference material such as Whitaker's Almanack, Who's Who, Bradshaw and the like, an outline knowledge of the main figures in English literature, what a catalogue is and how to use it, the general idea and method of classification, how to alphabetize and the like—in brief those things which any one working in a library must know and which any intelligent person can readily discover.

Section Three would not be tested by the Library Association. Instead,

suitable evidence from outside examining bodies—such as the R.S.A.—would be accepted. The subjects acceptable would be such appropriate matters as shorthand, typewriting, poster design, etc. The possession of any suitable certificates would be accepted as qualification.

Section Four would be a much more personal matter—a “merit increment” which any authority could, at its discretion, award to those of particularly good character, application or ability. Its value would be destroyed if it were to be made automatic. Properly used it could be both an incentive to and a recognition of good work. In order to secure reasonable uniformity, and for the guidance of library authorities, the L.A. would draft the syllabus for Sections 1 and 2, indicating appropriate standards, would list certificates acceptable for Section 3, and, generally, with the co-operation of its branches, assist in carrying out a programme of tuition which, though to some extent informal, would have a genuine place in the educational scheme.

(2) *Professionals.* After a few years it will be usual for entrants to the professional grade, whether graduates or not, to undertake a course at a Library School. At first there will, however, be a large if diminishing proportion who for various reasons are unable to attend the schools. Part-time and correspondence courses must temporarily be available for these. However they are able to study *all* professional assistants must pass the First Professional Examination of the L.A., which will be equivalent to the “Intermediate”, though the syllabus will be on broader lines. By insisting that all pass this national professional examination we shall secure uniformity and ensure that the proper standard is reached at all teaching institutions. Full-time Library Schools will therefore be teaching, and not examining, institutions. All reasonable people will appreciate that this is the fairest basis for both students and employers. There will inevitably be variations in the standards attained by different schools. But if all students must pass through the same test, any undesirable variations will then be perceived and can be corrected. This would not necessarily be the case if there were no such national criterion. Consequently we should fall into the grave danger of prejudicial, and perhaps prejudiced, differentiation between qualifications. This must be avoided. We have already seen how this differentiation, be it right or wrong, has militated against the absorption of the students of the one full-time school we had before the war. We must avoid any risk of invidious comparison; and we must, as a profession, keep control of our greatest responsibility—Registration. Those who do not attend a school must pass this L.A. examination as “external” students. Thus we shall secure justice, efficiency and as much uniformity as is desirable. Those who pass this examination will all have had some practical experience; school students will get it as part of their work, non-school students will not be accepted for the examination until they have had it. On passing the examination they will rank as “professionals”. As now, Associateship will be awarded to those who have passed the examination and have had three years’ full-time paid library service (attendance at a two-year School counting as one year’s service).

Clearly all professionals will be entitled to be registered as Associates after three years’ service, excepting only any who might be put on the professional grade when the scheme is started but who have not yet passed their Intermediate or equivalent examination. These we may reasonably expect to seek Associateship and as an inducement it should be laid down that non-Associates cannot automatically receive the last two increments of the professional scale, though this may be granted at the discretion of the authority where it is justified by merit.

The curriculum of the Library Schools (and the syllabus of the First Professional Examination of the L.A.) will be designed to ensure a sound general training in librarianship. It would be inappropriate here to attempt to give any detailed syllabus. That is an early task for the L.A. Certain general principles may be outlined, however. At this stage of professional education we must

provide a comprehensive practical background for future professional work rather than seek any type of specialization, this being treated at the second, Fellowship, stage. We have to qualify the students for the work they will have to perform in the general professional grade and not, intensively, for the higher posts above the scale.

The basic elements will be "book knowledge" and knowledge of general library methods, organization and activities. By "book knowledge" we do not mean a detailed grasp of English literature, the importance of which in public library work has been over-emphasized in the past. Instead we mean a practical knowledge of common reference material, important and standard books in all main fields, bibliography as a guide to the present-day exploitation of books (i.e. not "historical" bibliography) and acquaintance with the range, types and notable examples of general literature. The competent librarian should be as familiar with the essential things in engineering, economics, geography, history, and so on as he is with the English literary masterpieces—and he must know these, at first hand, too. He must know also about the material aspects of books—publishing and bookselling, and the manufacture, binding, repair, preservation and arrangement of books—and of all other library material such as prints, pamphlets, periodicals, etc. He must know how the library service is administered, governed and financed, and appreciate its purposes and values. He must know about the general routine work—and be able to do it. He must understand catalogues and classification schemes—not in any theoretical way, but so that he can use them effectively.

This will be a wide syllabus but everything that it embraces will be a genuine part of the equipment of the practising librarian. If we say that he will need everything it covers, we must, in order to keep it within bounds, say also that it will contain nothing he is not likely to need.

The Final examination, upon which the Fellowship will be awarded, will provide for the more individual, specialized, studies in librarianship.

All professionals will not take their Fellowship, but all who aspire to the higher grades will need to attempt it. They may not all succeed, for it must be of such a standard that all Fellows should be genuinely people of ability appropriate to the more responsible and specialized posts.

We envisage Fellowship as a qualification which will follow, not a brief period of cramming, but a longer and more urbane development of one's professional equipment as directed by a continued interest in one's work and in certain aspects of it in particular. Our Fellows of tomorrow will not all go through the same mill; they will secure Fellowship as an indication that they have made an intelligent personal study of their profession. Thus, though there will be facilities for advanced studies and research, we shall not have schools or courses for the Fellowship examination. This will be of a much less formal and more individual character.

Every candidate for Fellowship will be expected to have maintained a live interest in the whole field of librarianship—not to have forgotten what he learned at his school, but equally not to have "swotted" a more intensive syllabus. If he is keen on his work he will have kept in touch with developments, have studied other libraries, have met colleagues and discussed mutual problems and aspirations, have thought for himself and evolved his own ideas about things. We shall expect him to have made a particular study of some aspect of librarianship, connected perhaps with work he is doing, perhaps with work he is keen to do. It may be work with children, adolescents, adult students, or cataloguing or classification, or work in a "special" or university library, or the building of libraries, or bibliographical method, or the training of junior staffs, and so on, almost *ad infinitum*. The more varied the interests of Fellows the better the library world will be.

Thus the examination should consist of three elements, (1) a paper on things



in general—a paper so wide that “swotting” is impossible, and so full of opportunity that it can fairly test whether the candidate has rusticated or has kept his mind and interests alert; (2) an essay, or a memorandum, or a piece of appropriate individual work in the special field chosen by the candidate. He would have scope for originality and would be expected to display it; (3) an interview with assessors nominated by the L.A. for their special suitability and whose primary purpose would be to ensure, by a personal talk, that the essay was a genuine original effort.

(3) *Extra-Professional Qualifications.* We have room in the profession, in the higher grades especially, for people with interests and abilities additional to those needed for professional registration. Thus we must encourage our members to develop their individual abilities and thereby enrich the profession by studying for and obtaining other qualifications. For example, we need men versed in local government and administration, and so a Diploma in Public Administration would be a useful qualification for many. Again, in our technical and science, our art, music, history and other special departments, we need men and women with technical, scientific and other appropriate knowledge such as would be evidenced by the possession of the Degrees and Diplomas of universities and other examining bodies. Those who obtained such qualifications would be granted an immediate accelerated increment and a higher maximum while they remain on the general professional scale, whereas their chances of promotion when competing for better positions would be greatly enhanced.

#### LIBRARY SCHOOLS

Our first responsibility after the war—and it is one we must fulfil regardless of whether or not our hopes for the wider reforms envisaged in this report are to be realized—is to make good the effects of the war upon the training of library personnel. Of this there are two aspects, both of paramount importance. The men and women who have been taken from their normal work for war service have, as a rule, been thereby deprived of opportunities for professional education. But for the war they would have continued, maybe completed, their studies and would have enjoyed whatever concrete immediate rewards their qualifications might earn and would have stood so much better chances of promotion and securing fresh appointments. The war has, to some extent, caused a setback in their careers, due to no fault of their own. Common justice requires that whatever can be done by way of compensation shall be done. There is no useful compensation other than that of enabling them, as speedily as possible, to make up for the time they have lost. Had they not gone into the Forces the profession, and the public it serves, would have been richer as a result of their continued education; since they have gone it is the poorer. Therefore, quite apart from any regard for the individuals or any desire we may rightly feel to compensate them, the national interest requires that the shortage of trained personnel should be made good without delay. The library will have not less but greater responsibilities after the war; it will need more, not fewer, men and women capable of bearing them.

Therefore, whatever else happens—and we believe that much will happen—we must now make full arrangements for the intensive professional education of ex-service men and women as soon as the war is over. For this purpose—even were there no other—we should set up our library schools, where in a short intensive full-time course the student may cover the necessary ground. We do not, however, advocate the establishment of temporary schools only for this purpose because we are convinced that such schools should be permanent. Our duty to the ex-service people and to the public they have to serve is a valuable incentive and should help to establish a system of education we must then perpetuate. Moreover, it indicates that, for the first two or perhaps three years after the war, ex-service personnel should have, if not sole, at least priority use

of the schools, and that the courses there should be designed to meet their needs. After that the schools would assume the methods appropriate to permanent normal conditions.

After the last war the government provided grants for ex-service officers and men to enable them to complete their education "for service in the higher walks of commercial, industrial and professional life" and to make good "the nation's losses in the supply of trained and educated men due to the war". The courses included full-time Degree and Diploma courses, some Post-graduate courses, and full-time "refresher" courses. They also included education at polytechnics, technical institutes and similar public educational institutions. Altogether 26,500 men benefited by the scheme; the average period of the courses was just over two years and the average expenditure per student for fees and maintenance was £140 per annum. The grant made by the Board of Education (which was mainly responsible for the operation of the scheme) was intended to provide for the student's maintenance during his course, including the vacations, and for payment of his tuition fees, after taking into account his means from other sources. The maximum annual grant for maintenance for a single student was £175; for a married student the maximum was £200 with an additional allowance, not exceeding £24 a year in respect of each child under the age of 16, up to a total of four children. The grants appear to have been made on a wide and liberal basis. A candidate was expected to show that he was likely to profit by the kind of education which he desired, and that he was not already fully qualified. Application had to be made within a reasonable period from the date of demobilization (actually applications were received for some three or four years after the war). The Board was assisted in the administration of the scheme by a University Advisory Committee which dealt with applicants for admission to universities and by the local Education Authorities for Higher Education who, in consultation with the Head of the Institution concerned, advised other applicants, investigated their financial circumstances and made recommendations. Of 27,600 who applied up to May 1920 only 1,977 were, for various reasons, refused. The remainder took courses at over 250 institutions. It was a condition of the grant that the progress of the students should be reviewed, but this led to the discontinuance of only a small proportion. The scheme proved highly successful whether viewed as a means of recompensing the individuals for the loss of the war years or as an enrichment of the nation's resources in trained specialist personnel.

It is surely not unreasonable to anticipate that the government, especially with such favourable precedent, will introduce a similar scheme when this war is over. The library profession should certainly lend its influence and support on general grounds.

We should, however, go much further and take steps, now, to ensure that when such a scheme is brought forward the library movement will be in a position to benefit. As we are, in our future professional programme, seeking to increase the number of graduate library workers we should ask that those of our ex-service members who are Fellows should be enabled to attend Universities for degree courses—and we can rightly meet the condition that applicants should not be "fully qualified" because we do not believe that in future non-graduate entrants *will* be so regarded. We are, however, even more immediately concerned with those who have *not* completed their professional studies—those who have not passed the Intermediate examination, or who have done so but have not completed their studies for the Final. It is for them that this government scheme would be especially appropriate.

If the opportunity is to be grasped, however, we must have in being—or be ready to bring into being—the necessary training institutions. At present we have only one full-time library school in the country—assuming, that is, that the London University School, which ceased its operations at the outbreak of war, will resume them. One institution would be quite inadequate to meet the situation

—and in any case we will suggest later other additional functions for that School.

At the end of 1941 there were 1,200 members on service, of whom 150 were Fellows of the L.A. and 360 Associates. A number of the Fellows are already graduates, others are senior men whose services will be much occupied by important work in the vital reorganization period; of the remainder many will, we hope, be enabled to take degree or diploma courses at universities. For the Associates we must cater at the new Library Schools, giving them an intensive one-year course which will cover the ground they have not already taken as part of their studies for the Intermediate and which will enable them to pass the Final (perhaps with a revised syllabus). We should try to concentrate on this first in order to secure as soon as possible as many fully trained men free to help in the post-war developments. With several schools, however, we can use some for this purpose and others, according to demands, for the next—that of taking those who have not yet passed the Intermediate through a course, planned to meet a new, more general, intermediate examination. Arrangements can be made for those who have already done part of the work for Intermediate or Final to have refreshers in these parts and devote the time thus freed to other germane studies; in some cases shorter courses might be arranged. We do not know—because of the vicissitudes of war—whether the numbers given above will apply, but they are a reasonable guide. A few more people—youngsters and serving men (prisoners of war included) will pass examinations. On the whole we know roughly what the post-war educational problems will be.

We cannot know how many of the ex-service women will want to take advantage of the scheme. Surely a high proportion will do so—particularly if the prospects of reorganization are such as to give new horizons to librarianship.

For reasons we shall expand later, the schools should not be too big. An average of 25-30 students at each would be sufficient. There should be more than enough ex-service students to fill 6 or 7 schools—and if this figure proved optimistic the gaps could be filled by non-service students. It is suggested that these schools should be instituted at large cities with good and varied library services near at hand and where there are universities with which the schools can be associated. We suggest, therefore, the following cities—Glasgow (or Edinburgh), Manchester (or Liverpool), Birmingham, Bristol, Cardiff and London.

The ex-service scheme must be spread over perhaps three years, partly because there may be too many students, but also because some ex-servicemen will prefer to go back to their homes and their work for the first year after the war, proceeding later to the school.

We must keep in mind two complementary projects—an immediate scheme, for ex-service people, which we can put into operation with the minimum of delay after the war, and a permanent system of full-time training schools for existing members and for graduate and non-graduate entrants.

For the first part of the programme arrangements may be somewhat temporary, so long as they could lead to permanent bases; the great thing would be to get something useful that “worked”. Nevertheless we should have to establish the schools on a satisfactory, “genuine” basis as we could not expect to get government recognition for schools which were patently devices, however praiseworthy, for taking advantage of grant facilities. We may, indeed, have to give reasonable guarantees that these schools will be continued and to indicate the lines on which they shall be run.

Consider the matter in its three main aspects. Who will be responsible for the schools? How will they be financed? Who will be the tutors?

(a) *Who will be responsible for the schools?* Either a local education authority for higher education or a university *could* be the responsible authority. Whichever in fact *was* responsible it would have to act in such close co-operation with the other that they would really be partners. This will be the case even more in the

second stage when it becomes necessary to arrange considerable practical experience in libraries as part of the course—which will not be so vital a factor in these ex-service courses. These points must be considered: (1) we are convinced that the schools should be teaching and not examining bodies; therefore if a university accepts responsibility it must agree to this condition and not seek to award its own Diploma or other certificate; (2) there are great advantages attached to association with a university, such as the value of the communal life of the university, and the facilities available at the university for courses in cognate subjects, e.g. literature, which could be readily incorporated into the school curriculum. If a school is administered by an L.E.A. there is no insurmountable obstacle to the attendance of its students at such university courses by mutual arrangement. And though the communal university life would surely be a factor of importance in later years our ex-service students would already have gained much from another communal “university”—that of the services; (3) the school needs some, if simple, facilities in the way of lecture rooms and the like, but this, normally, would not be a difficulty; (4) as, in later years, a high proportion of students would be graduates (not necessarily of the same universities) taking the library school as an immediate post-graduate course, there would probably be advantages in continued association with the university. Therefore, on the whole, we would regard the university as the better body but can see no reason why the L.E.A. should not be responsible if there are any overriding local considerations or if the university is unwilling to accept point (1) above.

(b) *How will they be financed?* Our financial requirements will be modest—the salaries of the tutors, and a few small overheads. Where the ex-service men are concerned the grants (and we are assuming there will be grants) may cover the fees up to a reasonable amount. In the last scheme the average amount paid for fees was about £30. Would this be sufficient? If not, the L.E.A. would be able to secure from its higher education grant up to 50 per cent of the approved expenditure, whereas the universities could secure grants from the Treasury. So far as the ex-service men are concerned we can see no insuperable financial difficulty.

(c) *Who will be the tutors?* Obviously they must be men of outstanding ability and practical experience who are also capable of imparting their knowledge. Frankly this is one of our greatest difficulties—especially for the immediate post-war courses. For the later courses, when the schools have been properly organized on a permanent basis we shall be able to recruit and train suitable people who will make teaching at library schools, not their life's work, but a valuable element in their professional careers. For the first courses we must use the best people we can obtain. Of two things we are convinced—(a) that we cannot be satisfied with “part-time” tutors or with courses given by people who are meanwhile engaged in ordinary library duties and (b) that tutors should not be members of the staff of any library in the area served by the school and seconded for the purpose. As tutors we must have completely independent men who are either (later) employed as tutors by the body responsible for the school—i.e. the university or the L.E.A. or (at first) men from outside the area who have been granted leave of absence by their authorities for this task, the importance of which no one would deny.

How many tutors do we need at each school? Two—a senior and a junior. These two should be quite competent to cover the field, for, remember, it will be a general course. To supplement their work we can have access to university (or L.E.A.) teachers in any non-professional subject such as literature, which may be included in the course. There is no need, either at first or later, for more. If a tutor cannot have a sufficiently general knowledge of the field there will be something wrong with the course. As classes will (for other reasons) be small there will be no undue strain. The work of the schools will be controlled by the L.E.A. or university working in close co-operation with the L.A. at first (and

later under the general supervision of the Appropriate Body). Our first body of tutors (12 or 14 in number) must, therefore, consist of men chosen for their suitability, for whom we can seek temporary leave of absence from their employing local authorities. They might well themselves be fully qualified men now serving in the Forces, for these reasons: (a) Patriotic authorities might be more willing to continue to release for a further period men of whose services they have already been deprived, and for whom they have secured reasonably satisfactory war-time substitutes. (b) Because an ex-service tutor will be more in sympathy with ex-service students than any other. (c) Because some of the most likely people are in fact in the services or about to enter them. There is a fourth factor—that the schools could offer to tutors a salary more likely to attract good younger ex-service men than it would the suitable men of over military age—though of course in this work salary is not the vital factor but the appeal of professional opportunity to serve one's fellows.

The tutors for the first courses should be chosen *now*—with additional provision for the sort of contingency we hope will not arise—and arrangements made with their employers. In such leisure as army life affords they could be preparing themselves for their task. We could probably secure for them, at the cessation of hostilities, priority of demobilization so that they could take a brief refresher course in preparation for their work at the schools, which could not commence until a few months after the war.

What about the ex-service students themselves? They must, if they enter the schools, ask for leave of absence. After all, their authorities *have* done without them—and they have employed substitutes who have “carried on”. Some of these substitutes are potentially good material for which an expanding library service will have ample room; indeed if there should be casualties on a scale comparable with those of the last war, which we fervently trust will not be, they will be people of whom the profession will have need. Library authorities as a whole would be unfortunate if in the transition period they lost those “temporaries” who later would be valuable. The ex-service men's education scheme will be an interim means of retaining some, at least. It may well happen that the desirable “temporaries” are not employed at those places where there are ex-service school students, but the L.A. could easily arrange for their interchange. Thus we return to our ex-service man. He may want to stay at home for a while with his wife and family; very well—he returns to his job for a year or two and takes a later course. Or he may be keen to go at once to the school, in which case his war-time substitute—or another—will continue to hold down his job.

Many authorities will wish to continue to pay part salary to those who take courses; others may be content to give leave without pay. The fine spirit of the former will be a gesture of appreciation of which any ex-service man will be proud; the others may not, for financial reasons—pending the wider re-organization—be able to do this and the reasons will be understood. In any case the government grant will cover the cost in most cases. If there are any exceptional cases where the government grant is not sufficient to enable a man to go to the school, the L.A. should make such cases its own responsibility—either initiating a special fund or making a levy upon its members that all would gladly pay.

Yes. We know that this all sounds fine on paper. We know, in advance, all that the timid critics of not only this but all our proposals will say—that we are asking this and that and assuming the other. There will always be faint-hearted people who lack confidence and who, without seeking it, assume that there is no goodwill, no support to be had. The only test is this—is the scheme practicable *given* the will? If it is, why insult our local authorities and our own members by suggesting that the goodwill will not be forthcoming, as a firm support and encouragement, if we ask it reasonably for reasonable things? So let us do so.

I therefore recommend that the Emergency Committee of the L.A. be authorized (quite regardless of any other matters in this report which may or may

not prove controversial) to make all necessary enquiries and take all necessary steps to organize a system of post-war education on the lines indicated, and that they be authorized to seek, from any appropriate government department or other body, any funds which may be required for the organization of the system and any initial expenditure on equipment; further, that the Emergency Committee be instructed to prepare an appropriate syllabus of examinations for those attending such schools.

What, now, of the future—when, our ex-service men and women being helped to go forward in their professional careers, we need to establish these schools as an integral part of the professional scheme of things. We have already considered who shall attend them and, in general terms, what shall be taught there. Return to our previous three points. Who will be responsible for them? How will they be financed? Who will be the tutors? Let us add a fourth, what will be the curriculum and basis of tuition? The first has been answered.

How will they be financed? Clearly in much the same way as the training of teachers is financed. There will be two categories of student—new entrants and those who are already in library employment. New graduate entrants will have available normal existing (and we believe much extended) facilities—State and L.E.A. scholarships, maintenance grants and loans. Other new entrants will first join the staff of library authorities and will be treated as existing members. For these, financial assistance can be of two kinds—or rather can come from one of two directions. The L.E.A. of the area in which the student resides can, under existing regulations, incur the cost of any type of approved higher education and receive government grant of 50 per cent of such expenditure; the new Libraries Act can include a clause empowering “unit” or other library authorities to pay the cost of the education and maintenance of students and such costs will be eligible for government grant from the Appropriate Body. With either or both of these provisions attendance should become possible—again, of course given the goodwill of the authorities, which, however, will have the effective backing of the Appropriate Body. The standard rate of grant may not, in exceptional circumstances, entirely cover the costs, but in such cases, if we ask some sacrifice of students we shall also be able to offer the inducement of better ultimate conditions.

We pass, therefore, to the question of tutors. For the first, ex-service men’s and women’s courses, we hope with the goodwill and practical help of their employers to secure the services of men of established ability. That system cannot continue. So, while these first courses are in being, we must select a number of suitable men and let them attend a special course (which could be held at the London University School) for the training of tutors. These people will leave their ordinary work and, subject to their passing satisfactorily through the school, be allotted permanent appointments as tutors in succession to the initial men. When we say “permanent” we do not think, as already stated, that this should be a life’s career. We do not want it to be. On the contrary we believe that men of their ability would easily be absorbed into senior posts in the expanding service and would need to be constantly replaced. Work as a tutor would, indeed, prove a professional asset, as the hallmark of an outstanding young man of early recognized abilities. If they were ex-service men their training might come within the purview of the normal ex-service grants scheme; if not, we might need to assist them either from the Association’s funds or from grants for the purpose from the Appropriate Body (if it already exists) or another government department or an interested outside organization. The difficulty is not insuperable.

What will be the curriculum? This has already been discussed in relation to professional grading and examinations. The Library School course must in addition provide for a considerable amount of practical experience. The ex-service men will have had some previous library experience before enlistment, or before going to the school; most of their time, apart from special visits and demonstrations, may well be spent on class work and directed individual study, particularly as we are proposing in their case to be content with a one-year’s course. The

same will apply to many of the non-ex-service men and women with library experience who attend. These will be fairly numerous at first, including not only those men and women who remain in library work during the war but also those "temporaries"\* who seek to secure permanent posts. Some of these "permanent" and "temporaries" will elect to take a one-year course; those who are employed in small libraries or whose experience has been limited will be well advised to take two-year courses. For an initial period, according to requirements, both one- and two-year courses will be available at different schools.

The regular two-year courses will include up to 50 per cent practical experience, to be gained by working in good libraries of different types in the neighbourhood of the schools. Arrangements will be made, by the school, with all suitable libraries, university and special as well as public, to employ the students, either part-time or for short periods, at intervals throughout the course. They will work, without pay, as ordinary members of the staff, subject to normal discipline and staff conditions, but every effort must be made to give them an insight into the methods and functions of all the main branches of library work. This practical work will be arranged to accord with the theoretical training and will be co-ordinated by the tutor in consultation with the various librarians concerned. Those libraries which afford hospitality will be put to some trouble and inconvenience but in return they will receive some measure of assistance from the students, who will naturally remain in each department for a long enough period not only for them to understand its main features but also to be able to perform simple duties.

Such then are our proposals. The war—for out of evil there always comes some good—should help to make their adoption easier. We hope that schemes for ex-service men's grants will help us to establish the schools. Not less important is the fact that the war has provided the profession with a very necessary element—people capable of continuing to act as substitutes for the first batches of students. If we had had to introduce such schools in peacetime on a sufficiently large scale our first difficulty would have been that of providing people to replace the students when they left their posts to attend the schools. Fortunately—unless serious losses should alter the present prospect—we shall have a considerable body of temporaries with some experience. They have held the fort so long that we can ask them to hold the fort a little longer. Once the scheme is well established we can offer them their recompense because, from then onwards the library movement as a whole will need to carry a small surplus of personnel equivalent to the library school population at any period. With the large units of our proposed reorganization this will be easy. In most staffs at any time there will be one, two or more away at the school, the normal rate of absence being covered by an increase, perhaps temporary, in the establishment. Even if one unit had more than an average proportion wishing to attend the schools, the L.A. could organize exchanges and temporary loans of staff where they were needed.

One last point arises. We must make up our minds about these schools and their curricula as soon as possible—certainly before the war is over. And we must prepare and put into operation an appropriate examination syllabus. Its outlines have already been indicated, but it will be useful to recapitulate.

(a) Those who have nearly completed the Final should be given a reasonable time to do so according to the existing syllabus.

(b) Those who have passed the Intermediate but not made much progress towards the Final will either go to a school or study privately. For these we need a comprehensive syllabus dealing with the ground that has not yet been covered for the Intermediate, plus some revision. They would sit for a revised Final, leading to Fellowship.

\* We must always remember that as local authorities have, rightly, generally refused to make permanent appointments in war-time, a large proportion of our present "temporaries" are young people who would otherwise have secured normal permanent appointments. Often these people will be financially penalized as they will be outside any scheme for "making up" their salaries while they are on service. We must be very careful not to penalize them further.

(c) All who have not yet taken the Intermediate should, either after attending a one- or two-year school course or after private study, pass a general comprehensive examination and sit for a new Intermediate Examination which would lead to the Associateship. For Fellowship they would later take the new course already indicated.

In time the differences would disappear, as those who had gained their qualifications according to different syllabuses earned that wide personal experience which is a bigger factor in making a librarian than any examinations can be. Meanwhile the L.A. could make any adjustments and allowances necessary to avoid causing hardships.

As this matter is an urgent one and in view of the impossibility during wartime of calling representative meetings, surely it is not asking too much to suggest that the Emergency Committee should be given full authority to proceed. Revisions, if necessary, can follow in the light of experience. The great thing is to put a sound and eminently desirable project into active operation as soon as the time for action arises. If we have to wait until all the delaying processes of pseudo-democracy have been duly performed we shall surely miss our opportunities—and deserve to miss them.

We are now in a position to formulate our proposed scales of salaries. These are in three parts: (a) non-professional, (b) general professional and (c) higher and specialized positions.

#### PROPOSED NATIONAL SALARIES SCALES FOR THOSE EMPLOYED IN THE BRITISH PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICE

1. These scales should be read in conjunction with the explanations given in Ch. XV, and in the preceding sections of this chapter.

2. No person shall be prejudicially affected by the adoption of these scales.

3. All persons employed in library units situated wholly or principally within the London Metropolitan Police area shall receive a bonus of ten per cent on the appropriate scale salaries and increments. All persons employed in the library units incorporating Birmingham, Glasgow, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester and Sheffield shall receive a bonus of five per cent on the appropriate scale salaries and increments.

4. All salaries specified in these scales are based upon the value of the pound sterling in the standard year, 1938-9. It is to be understood that all would be adjusted, as necessary, so as to compensate for any difference there might be in the purchasing power of the pound at the time when the scales come to be applied.

#### A. *Non-professional Scale:*

Minimum educational qualification shall be School Leaving Certificate.

Step.	Age.	Men and Women.
1	16	£60
2	17	£72
3	18	£84
4	19	£96
5	20	£108
6	21	£120
7		£132
8		£144
9		£156
10		£168
11		£180
12		£190
13		£200
14		£210
15		£220
16		£230
17		£240



For non-professional assistants with higher qualifications see Scale (B) note (g).

NOTES. (a) Persons who fail to pass either Section One or Section Two of the approved tests for non-professional staff shall not proceed beyond Step 4 without the special approval of the library authority.

(b) Persons who fail to pass any of the approved tests shall not proceed beyond step 13. Those who pass one section may proceed to Step 14, those who pass two sections to Step 15, those who pass three sections to Step 16 and those who pass all sections to Step 17.

#### B. *General Professional Scale :*

The following may be placed on this scale :

(i) Associates and Fellows of the Library Association.

(ii) Those who pass the First Professional Examination of the Library Association either after attendance at a full-time library school for two years (in the case of ex-service members, one year), or after three years' full-time paid employment in an approved library in a non-professional grade or otherwise.

(iii) Other persons who at the adoption of the scale are in the employment of existing library authorities and who are performing work of a character approved as professional—see Note (e).

Step.	Completed Years of Professional Service.	Men.	Women.
		£	£
1	0	180	162
2	1	192	171
3	2	204	180
4	3	216	189
5	4	228	198
6	5	240	207
7	6	252	216
8	7	264	225
9	8	276	234
10	9	288	243
11	10	300	252
12	11	312	261
13	12	324	270
14	13	336	279
15	14	348	288
16	15	360	[297]
17	16	366	[306]
		[378]	
		[390]	

NOTES. (a) An increment of one step shall be given to a Graduate of an approved university.

(b) An increment of one step shall be given to a Fellow of the Library Association.

(c) An increment of one step shall be given to any one on the grade holding an approved Diploma or recognized higher qualification.

(d) The increment awarded under (a) shall not entitle persons on the scale to receive a total salary in excess of the scale maximum, *but* Fellows may, subject to the approval of the library authority, proceed to a maximum equivalent to one step above the scale maximum and those holding qualifications as provided in (c) may similarly proceed to a maximum equivalent to one step above the maximum scale and those holding such qualifications as provided in (c) who are also Fellows of the Library Association may, subject to the approval of the library authority, proceed to a maximum not exceeding two steps above the scale maximum.

(e) On the initial adoption of the scale by a library authority any assistant who is engaged on duties of a suitable professional character shall be placed on that step in the scale which the authority, with the approval of the Appropriate Body, shall deem appropriate having regard to his length of service, qualifications, salary and other relative considerations.

(f) Persons on this scale who are not Associates of the Library Association when they would otherwise be due to receive the last two increments of the scale shall not receive either or both of these without the specific approval of the library authority.

(g) Subject to there being appropriate posts available, persons not possessing qualifications in librarianship, but possessing approved qualifications in accountancy, secretarial work, etc., may at the discretion of the authority be placed upon this scale starting at an appropriate step.

(h) Assistants who obtain distinctions not herein specified but of such a nature that they bring credit to the service or whose work is specially meritorious may be granted one expedited increment and it is recommended that this power should be exercised sufficiently frequently to make it a genuine incentive.

### C. Scales for Higher Professional Grades :

NOTES. 1. Upon the initial adoption of these scales by any authority all persons concerned shall be specifically re-appointed to the various positions embraced in these grades and each shall normally commence at the scale minimum appropriate to his new position, *provided* that thereby no person is prejudicially affected. All positions in these grades which become vacant or are created after the initial adoption of the scales shall be filled only after public advertisement.

2. Increments shall be annual and of the following amounts : Unit Chiefs—increments of £25 ; Unit Deputies—increments of £20, followed by a final increment of such smaller amount as remains due ; all other positions—increments of £15.

3. It will be noted that the minimum for certain positions may be less than the maximum for men of the General Scale (B). This has been provided deliberately to encourage the appointment to such posts of men and women at an age lower than that at which they would attain their scale maximum.

### Unit Headquarters Staff :

Position.	Grade 5 Units.	Grade 4 Units.	Grade 3 Units.	Grade 2 Units (Main Lib. <i>not</i> Regional Library)	Grade 2 Units (Main Lib. <i>also</i> Regional Library)	Grade 1 Units (Main Libs. <i>all are</i> Regional Libraries)
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Chief Librarian of Unit ..	750-850	850-950	950-1,100	1,100-1,250	1,200-1,350	1,350-1,500
Deputy Chief Librarian ..	500-575	575-635	635-740	740-835	800-900	900-1,000
*Superintendent of Branches ..	—	410-470	455-515	515-575	515-575	560-620
Transport Officer ..	320-380	320-380	320-380	320-380	320-380	320-380
Chief of Main Library ..	Scale as for	Central Libraries		600-700	650-750	700-800
Chief of Accessions Dept. ..	380-440	410-470	455-515	500-560	515-575	560-620
Chief Cataloguer ..	Gen. Scale	320-380	365-425	410-470	425-485	470-530
Chief of Reference Work ..	380-440	410-470	455-515	500-560	515-575	560-620
Secretary and Treasurer ..	380-440	410-470	455-515	515-575	515-575	560-620
Supt. of Buildings ..	320-380	320-380	365-425	365-425	365-425	365-425
Chief Assistants ..	General	Scale	320-380	365-425	365-425	410-470
Officer i/c Special Activities ..	General	Scale	320-380	365-425	365-425	410-470
Officer i/c Special Requests ..	General	Scale	320-380	365-425	365-425	410-470
Chief Children's Librarian ..	320-380	320-380	320-380	365-425	365-425	365-425

\* In certain units where the number of branches is small this officer's duties may be carried out by the Deputy Librarian.

*Librarians in Charge of Special Collections and Departments :*

(a) £525-650; (b) £450-525; (c) £380-450—according to the size and importance of the collection or department and the special qualifications required.

*Staff at Central Libraries (i.e. other than Main Libraries) :*

Position.	Up to 35,000 population.	35,000 to 50,000 pop.	50,000 to 100,000 pop.	Over 100,000 population.
Chief Librarian*	£ 380-440	£ 440-500	£ 500-560	£ 560-620
Principal Assistant	General	Scale	365-425	410-470
Reference Librarian	General	Scale	320-380	365-425
Lending Librarian	General	Scale	320-380	365-425

\* If acting as Area Librarian the Chief Librarian shall receive an additional sum, not exceeding £100 per annum, according to the number and size of the branches and centres in the Area.

*Assistants in Charge of Branches :*

- (a) Where total staff (including Assistant in Charge) is 3 or less .. General Scale  
 (b) Ditto .. 4 or 5 .. £320-380  
 (c) Ditto .. 6 or more .. £365-425

## EXAMPLES SHOWING THE OPERATION OF THE SCALES

1. "A" enters a London library at the age of 17. His commencing salary is £79 4s. per annum (i.e. Step 2 of Non-professional Scale, plus 10 per cent). He passes Section One of the approved tests but does not attempt Sections Two or Three. After twelve complete years of service he reaches his maximum of £231 (i.e. Step 14 plus 10 per cent). Later, as he gives reasonably good service, he is awarded Section Four of the tests and goes to £242. Dissatisfied with this he decides to study again and passes Sections Two and Three, thus reaching the final maximum of £264.

2. "B" enters a provincial unit at the age of 19 after two years in a commercial office. He starts at £96. He is keen and ambitious and soon passes his tests. This brings him no immediate advantage so he proceeds to study accountancy and when 24 passes an approved professional examination. He is able then to secure a post as assistant to the Secretary of the Birmingham Unit. As he has professional (though non-"library") qualifications he is put on the General Professional Scale; as he has not yet had any "professional" service he starts at Step 1 and receives £189 (i.e. Step 1 plus 5 per cent). In three or four years he is appointed secretary to a Grade 5 Unit and receives £380. Three and a half years later he is getting £425. Then he moves on to the secretaryship of a Grade 3 London Unit and starts at £500.

3. "C", at the age of 19, goes to a University for three years, there graduating. She proceeds at once to a full-time Library School where she takes a two-year course. She then secures employment on the professional staff of a Grade 2 Unit. Her commencing salary is £171 (i.e. Step 1 plus one increment for graduation). She continues her studies, being particularly interested in work with children. After two years she decides to take, as a part-time student, the Diploma Course in the Psychology of Childhood at Birmingham University. This is made possible by her obtaining a vacant post in the professional grade in the Birmingham Unit Library. Her commencing salary there is £198 9s. (i.e. she is credited with her two years of professional service, receives as before one increment for graduation and is given the 5 per cent bonus applicable in the Birmingham area). She is now 26. After two more years she obtains her Diploma and is given an additional increment for this "approved Diploma", her salary, when she is 28, becoming £226 16s. The following year she is awarded her Fellowship and now, with the further increment due for Fellowship, receives

£245 14s. Being now well qualified and experienced she secures a post as Chief Children's Librarian in a Grade 4 Unit at £320-£380.

4. "D", with precisely the same start—graduation and Library School—makes, however, no further attempt to study. At 29, the age when "C" secures her post as Chief Children's Librarian, "D" remains on the General Scale at Step 6, £207.

5. "E" is a boy who leaves his Secondary School when, at the age of 19, he passes the Higher Schools examination. He does not go to a University. Instead he gets work as a non-professional assistant. He starts at £96. He passes his non-professional tests and after three years' service he is sent to a full-time Library School (the unit authority paying his fees and maintenance). After two years he returns to his unit and goes on to the General Professional Scale, starting at Step 1, £180. He is now 24. He studies for an external Diploma in Public Administration, which he secures after three years. His salary is then £228 (i.e. one step for each of 3 years' service plus one increment for his D.P.A.). He is now appointed Assistant in Charge of a branch with three assistants and continues on the same scale of salary. After one year's experience he is transferred to a larger branch with five assistants and starts on the Higher Grades at £320. Meanwhile he has studied for his Fellowship, knowing that without this he will not secure a better paid position. He obtains his Fellowship the next year (when he is 29); he does not now receive any increment for his Fellowship as he is no longer on the General Scale. So his salary now is £335 (i.e. £320 plus one normal increment for one year's service in his present post). Two years later, however, he obtains the position of Superintendent of Branches in a Grade 4 Unit starting at £410. Later he is promoted to the Deputy Librarianship of the same unit, starting at £575. Next he becomes Chief Librarian of a Grade 5 Unit (£750-£850) and finally secures the Chief Librarianship of a Grade 3 Unit in the London area, starting at £1,045 (i.e. £950 plus 10 per cent).

6. "F" is a woman of 32 already on the staff of a medium-sized town which becomes part of a Grade 2 Unit. She has been employed as a Senior Assistant for 5 years. She passed her Fellowship examinations 4 years ago. She holds no other qualifications. On the adoption of the scheme she is put on the General Scale and given credit for 5 years' professional service and also one additional increment step because she is a Fellow. So she starts, under the new scheme, at a salary of £216. If she is content to stay where she is she will proceed to a maximum of £297. If she has ambition she can, however, at any time apply for posts in the Higher Grades.

7. "G", aged 45, is the Chief Librarian of a town of 60,000 which is incorporated in a Grade 3 Unit, becoming a Central Library. His salary at the time the Unit was formed was £550 and he had two further increments of £25 each to come, so that, had there been no new system, he would have gone to a maximum of £600. Let us consider three alternative future careers for "G":

(a) He prefers to stay where he is. The appropriate scale salary for his position under the new system is £500-£560. Despite this, however, he will start at £550 and get the two increments he would otherwise have received. His financial position will be the same. His status will not be quite the same. He will administer his library as part of the unit and work under the general direction of the Unit Chief; by way of compensation, however, he will be relieved of much of the worry and responsibility he had previously borne, he will probably be given a better staff to help him and he will enjoy greater opportunities for developing the work of his library under the new régime. He will lose little in local prestige, as he will still be the Chief Librarian of Blank Library; he will, in fact, merely change masters—from a committee to a professional colleague, a change which it is not cynical to suggest may often be one for the good.

(b) Instead of the above, the Unit Chief [and Authority] asks him to become Unit Deputy—chiefly because he will have more opportunity to utilize his abilities

in that capacity, but also because economy will follow if a man who *must* receive £550-£600 is given a post for which this salary is more appropriate. Actually, of course, as Unit Deputy he will receive £635-£740, so that he himself will benefit financially as well as the unit. It is anticipated that frequently those present chiefs who do not become Unit Chiefs will find promotion and increased rewards by becoming Unit Deputies, Superintendents of Branches, etc.

(c) He applies for a post as Unit Chief of another Unit, or as Deputy in another Grade 1, 2 or 3 Unit.

As there will be over 200 positions under the new system carrying salaries of £600 and over, there should ultimately be very few men like "G" who cannot find in the re-organization the awaited opportunity for bettering their position, if they so desire. This applies with even greater force to those at present receiving lower salaries than "G".

## CHAPTER XVIII

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Let us agree about the common foundations upon which we wish to build that [national] life, and we *shall* build it. There is nothing that we are more likely to get than the things which we wish for. I believe there are three things which we all want, and which we must see that we get. The first is to make this a truly cheerful country, a country in which we can laugh when we want and put our tongue out at the people we don't like ; a spacious, active, enterprising, gay country. The second is to see that we are never again faced with the horror of mass unemployment. The third is to modernize the capital equipment, by which I mean the transport, the roads, ports, towns, houses and amenities of our country. And the curious thing is that in reaching for the third of these objectives, we shall be going a long way towards attaining the first two. . . .

That is the sort of task to which the state will have to apply itself after the war. And, like victory, we shall only be able to accomplish it if there is unity of purpose and determination. By all means let us disagree upon matters of detail and how best to achieve what we want. Every man has the right to express his own opinion. And let us exercise that right in the freest possible manner, always provided that we do not cloud the target at which we are aiming. But let us remain united on the main objective. (*Extract from a Broadcast by the Rt. Hon. OLIVER*

We started with the thesis that the society which lacked adequate public libraries was sorely handicapped by want of the knowledge and information essential to its material, mental and spiritual development. The purpose of libraries, we asserted, was the utilization of the recorded experience and thought of the men and women of yesterday and today to help in the making of whole individuals better able to contribute to and benefit from the constructive life of the community, the nation and the world. We believed that our work as librarians could be of value to all men of goodwill whatever their different tasks, tastes and responsibilities, that books were essential to any real democratic conditions of living, that they were the tools and the symbols of true freedom. We have seen nothing to dim this faith in the importance of libraries ; we can find no insuperable obstacles to their acquiring the power to serve mankind fully in every such way.

But it is clear that, although the present achievements of public libraries are of incalculable and vital significance, the service as a whole is at present not able to meet adequately such demands as already exist, although a majority of the public are yet not fully aware of the values of books and libraries. Neither is the service, generally, sufficiently developed properly to demonstrate these values. All libraries should be to all men an opportunity and an inspiration ; too many are a disappointment and a failure.

If all our libraries were as good as the best we should still not be content, although the widespread influence they would exercise would surely make further progress an easy matter. As it is, our good libraries are few. There are too many libraries we can only describe, with honesty, as bad. We have seen that a considerable proportion of the public are without any library service at all, and a still larger part are without any worthy of the name.

The reasons for this inadequacy have not been difficult to find : units of service that are far too small ; authorities which are unable or unwilling to provide the necessary means ; lack of co-ordination ; often lack of guidance and inspiration ; inadequate personnel—and absence of the factors which alone can secure it.

We have seen, quite clearly it is hoped, what conditions are necessary if libraries are to be properly developed. The units of service must be large enough to provide adequate organized book stocks and efficient planned administration ; they must be large enough to employ staffs, of different appropriate types, suitably qualified and attracted by proper rewards and opportunities. Sufficient financial

resources, so adjusted that they are reasonably equal in all parts of the country, must be made available. While the library, which is essentially a "local" service, must be administered by appropriate local authorities alive to their responsibilities and keen to meet them, there is need for a national body to co-ordinate and stimulate their work and to help to provide those departments of librarianship which are of wider significance than the various local services.

Three factors have dominated all our considerations. Firstly, we can no longer tolerate the existing disparities; *all* men are equally entitled to, and in need of, the best possible libraries. Secondly, book stocks are the essential element. There is clearly an "optimum" stock, intensively and extensively. All potential readers must have full access to such a stock. It cannot be provided piecemeal. With the optimum number of books formed into a balanced stock it becomes possible to provide for most of the needs of most readers; with smaller stocks we, progressively, lose our power to do those things which are most worth doing. The provision and maintenance of this optimum stock implies its close relation to an appropriate body of potential users. We are convinced that normally no stock of less than about 300,000 volumes provided for and by an equal population can give an effective and economical service. This is the lower limit. The upper limit, of about one million, is dictated by the further consideration that, with few unavoidable exceptions, the service which exceeds this sphere of influence is in danger of losing its vital contacts with the individual and with local conditions. With units of service within these limits we can fulfil all our functions; outside them we cannot. Thirdly, we have found that in library units of this pattern it becomes possible to employ the necessary personnel. On the one hand the staff needed is large enough to permit of such grading as will offer hospitality to and opportunities for the various types of personnel required for different duties. On the other hand there is full scope for those qualities which are needed for the proper execution of the tasks of librarianship—specialized knowledge, technical qualifications, administrative abilities.

In short, we need organized stocks and organized staffs, but neither can exist in an unorganized system. Our present system is seriously unorganized.

In this report we have discussed many developments, great and small, which we regard as desirable—such, for example, as specialization, central cataloguing, better facilities for the rural population, and regional reference libraries. The cardinal necessities, nevertheless, seem to us to be these four: the organization of the large unit of library service, a national body to co-ordinate local effort, a better system of finance, and adequate educational facilities for our personnel, together with effective inducements to attract the best type of men and women.

How are we to secure these things? We believe that they can all be achieved—that they *must* be achieved if libraries are to gain their full stature, or, rather let us say, if libraries are to give to the service of humanity all they can be made capable of giving.

Libraries, however, are not, and cannot fruitfully be regarded as, an isolated element in the present and future scheme of things. We might have given the impression that we so regarded them because we have deliberately concentrated upon the conditions and needs of libraries even to the extent of formulating a scheme for their development which, at least theoretically, could be implemented regardless of other considerations. If library authorities and the profession could so persuade the government, it would indeed be possible for all our reforms to be brought about by one single action—the passing of a Bill establishing the Appropriate Body and giving it the power to impose the desired unit system and to do all contingent things. We have considered this possibility and shown how it could be grasped if the opportunity should arise in that way.

As a matter of practical politics, however, we must consider alternatives. We must seek to attain all our objectives, but we may succeed best by less direct means. I am not, at this last stage of an uncompromising report, preaching

compromise. I am merely suggesting that we may wisely divide our objectives into three categories—those we can secure best by allying ourselves with others who seek them for perhaps other reasons, those which we can seek for our own specific needs but which we shall gain only with the help of others, and those which we can achieve by our own efforts.

The unit system belongs to the first category. We have shown clearly the kind of unit we consider necessary for the proper development of a library service—its size, financial needs, organization, staffing and government. Other men are reviewing the same national field with the intention of discovering those reforms in local government which will secure units for local service similarly appropriate for other local functions—public health, education, police, transport, and so on—and which will promote the two essentials of any healthy future—equitable financing and the proper control of all services by democratically elected local governing bodies. Each body of men, concerned with its own especial phase, will view the problems from its own angle. There is every reason to think that the ideal solution for one may be less good for another. But there is no reason to think that there cannot be an adjustment of interests which will meet most of the requirements of most of the elements concerned. We have shown here how we would solve *our* problems. We may feel that a very similar solution may serve equally well such other functions as public health or education. If such should be the case, or if the adjustments were of such a character as not seriously to prejudice our essential requirements, our hopes would be immeasurably enhanced by our making common cause with those who are working for the better future of other aspects of the same task, which is that of helping our fellow men.

Therefore I suggest that we place our ideas and ideals at the disposal of all who are concerned with the reconstruction of local government and that we collaborate with them to the fullest possible extent.

The establishment of our Appropriate Body falls into the second category. Whatever course may be taken regarding the reform of local government areas and finance we shall have the same need for the stimulus and co-ordinating powers of a national governmental body concerned with the development of the library service. Indeed, if we failed either to share in a suitable new local government system or to secure, as an alternative, any scheme for *ad hoc* library units, the value of a national body would be even greater. It could at least help us to overcome some of the disadvantages of the unsatisfactory anarchic conditions which now, and would still, prevail. The establishment of the Appropriate Body can, indeed, be regarded as a factor to be sought independently of other reforms.

To the third category belong our proposals for a better system of professional education. It is true that our way will be easier if we have in sight the probability of a sane system of libraries in which our men and women will be able to work fruitfully, and if we have in this project the support of a progressive Appropriate Body. But if we have neither we shall still retain our professional responsibility towards our own members, especially those who have served the nation in another capacity, and towards our public. We may not, alone, be able to achieve everything; we can and must achieve a great deal. Our proposals for the education of ex-service men and women, and for other members of the profession, present and future, are such that we can give them reality by our own efforts. The task is an immediate one which must be borne by those of us who, so far, remain in civilian life. The others have left in our keeping not only the future of librarianship but their own future; are we going to fail them?

I do not want this report to share the fate of too many similar documents, including those of much more responsible and weighty individuals, committees and commissions, and pass, after perhaps a brief discussion, into the realm of forgotten things. Rather let me say that though I do not care what happens to the report itself, I want the ideas that it contains to provoke some positive action. Let me therefore indicate the kind of action I suggest.



Firstly, there is the action of our own minds. I ask my colleagues to examine the proposals, to discuss them, to improve and modify them if need be. There must be sufficient discussion for the majority of informed persons to arrive at a general basis of agreement, but not so much that action is strangled by words so that acceptance of general principles is hidden by controversy over less essential elements. Secondly, when we have decided what it is that we seek to do, we must separate our proposals into the three categories already indicated. Those matters which concern others must be presented for their consideration; we must set to work at once upon those tasks which we can attempt, at least in their initial stages, ourselves.

The first two categories will embrace many matters requiring discussion and negotiations. The L.A. should therefore appoint a small committee of men and women whom it is prepared to trust and give them power to discuss, to negotiate and to achieve all they are able which is consonant with the accepted principles involved. The work which falls into the third category should similarly be entrusted to suitable committees—not one, but as many as can be usefully employed so that the whole weight of the active membership can be deployed. We have suffered too much in the past by failure to utilize all our potentially active members. In our proposals surely there is sufficient to be done to demand and utilize the abilities of all who will help. The work of such committees will, in some cases, be limited by the extent to which general principles have already gained acceptance. For example, those who were studying the post-war restoration of stocks and premises obviously could not present a final scheme until they knew whether the unit system was going to be adopted; but they could do much preliminary investigation and provisional planning. Similarly the number and kind of entrants to our suggested Library Schools will in time be very different if our proposals for national scales and organized qualifications are implemented, but, whether or not, we shall still need to teach those who, whatever the organization of the service, have to maintain librarianship. Therefore we can at once go ahead with planning our schools, earmarking the tutors, revising the syllabus and the like. In other fields, such as central cataloguing, the problems of wartime and post-war book supply, there is much to be discussed and prepared once our general programme is clear.

In conclusion I would remind members of a phrase used earlier. The choice before them is not just that of accepting or rejecting the proposals I have formulated. The choice they must make is whether or not they desire and are willing to work for a worthy future for librarianship and all that it can represent. If they reject these proposals they must, without delay, substitute for them whatever other proposals they may deem better, or they will be deciding against such a future. I cannot believe that this is their desire. If they accept them the task is only begun. I started this work with a deep sense of responsibility. I regarded it as *my* opportunity to help my colleagues to appreciate and grasp *their* opportunities. It cannot be more. I have criticized and I expect criticism. Only one thing would cause me bitter disappointment—if my small contribution to a great cause failed to act as the prelude to united and effective action.

## PART IV

### CHAPTER XIX

#### LIBRARIES IN WARTIME

One of the chief purposes of this survey—indeed, as has been stated in the preface, its immediate provocation—was to study the effect of the war upon the public library service. To what extent has the war brought new demands and increased existing uses, how far have these been met, how far and for what reasons have libraries been unable to do so, what special difficulties have been created by war conditions and the ravages of war, to what extent will the effect of the war persist after its conclusion, what can be done now to solve immediate problems and what must be planned now, and what must be done now or later to facilitate the transition from war to peace conditions—these are some of the matters that have been considered.

At the outset of the inquiry the Library Association sent a questionnaire to all library authorities in Great Britain seeking information on various specific points and requesting the comments of librarians and accounts of their special wartime activities and difficulties. All but a few responded. The amount of information given varied considerably but the total of 413 replies, many of the greatest interest, has provided a thorough and detailed picture of wartime librarianship. I am most indebted to my colleagues for this assistance. Study of these replies and of the supplementary material of all kinds available at the Library Association Information Bureau has been amplified by considerable correspondence and many discussions with colleagues met in the course of my survey. Thus I suffered from no shortage of material; instead, when finally drafting this chapter I found myself confronted with a *digest*, ably compiled by the Librarian of the Library Association, which had to be reduced to at least a twentieth of its bulk.

Apart from this need for reduction, the principal difficulty is that unless I am careful I may give away much information "of value to the enemy". For this reason I must often avoid referring to places by name and if this compels me to use excessively such phrases as "many libraries", "some places", I trust I shall be forgiven.

First let us consider the effect of the war upon the reading habit and the use made of libraries by old and new readers.

Despite concern, such as was voiced at the Liverpool Conference, that librarianship would be prejudiced, even eclipsed, by the urgencies of war, none of us had any doubt that such would be gravely undesirable. We knew that libraries had no less a place in the life of a people at war than it enjoyed in peacetime. With this view the Lord Privy Seal, in June 1939, concurred, saying that he "is well aware of the valuable work done by libraries both during the last war and after the conclusion of peace, and that he is of opinion that in the event of a future war libraries would again render useful service to the nation by maintaining, so far as circumstances permit, their recreational and educational facilities". It is doubtful, however, whether we then realized how considerable that service would be or that, despite much more serious difficulties, it would—partly because libraries are now better equipped than they were in 1914, partly because the impact of the war upon civilian life has been very much greater—already far exceed the work done between 1914 and 1918.

There is striking evidence that during this war people have read much more

than ever before. This is shown statistically in two ways—by the general increase in issues and by the increased number of issues per head of population.

Of the 413 libraries of which information is available, only 23 per cent report that their total issues for the year 1940-1 (i.e. the year embracing the worst period of raiding, the disaster of France, etc.) are less than those for the year 1938-9. Often the decrease is small and nearly all these libraries are in districts where the population had been decreased considerably by evacuation. Of the six or seven exceptions to this generalization, two were towns where the decline had set in as early as 1935 and is clearly due to local inadequacies; at another the issues, normally exceptionally high in relation to population, are still well above the national average; at a fourth the decline was due to exceptionally severe snowstorms.

About 2 per cent of the libraries report no change; 75 per cent report increased issues. Generally the increase is considerable. Let us give some examples:

Medium and small towns in reception and neutral areas .. .. .					per cent
					93, 93, 80, 80, 63, 62, 57, 52, 43, 40, 36, 35
County reception areas .. .. .					66, 42, 40, 26, 23
Large industrial towns .. .. .					43, 17, 16

Issues per head of population have, with very few exceptions, increased *everywhere*. This increase is often very striking—and it is found in places where the pre-war service was bad as well as where it was good, in reception, neutral and evacuation areas. To select only a few representative instances of the percentage increase of issues per head of estimated wartime population in the period 1940-1 over issues per head of peacetime population in 1938-9:

					per cent
Large provincial cities .. .. .					34, 28, 26, 19
Medium and small provincial towns .. .. .					59, 59, 55, 50, 48, 37, 37, 35
East coast towns .. .. .					102, 89, 44, 24
County systems .. .. .					33, 25, 24, 21, 21, 20
London suburbs .. .. .					80, 45, 38, 28
Central London boroughs .. .. .					92, 59, 46, 46, 41, 40, 30, 27

There are many similar cases. In normal times there is always considerable increase to report but it is not on this scale—and in none of the places cited can it be attributed to exceptional “library” circumstances, as we have deliberately excluded a few places with equally telling results where these might be largely attributed to such things as a new building or a “new broom”.

Three points are especially notable—the remarkable increase in reading in the heavily “blitzed” districts, the admirable work done in certain hard-pressed coast towns, and the most significant fact that the permanent inhabitants of reception areas have themselves increased their reading.

For this state of affairs there are many well recognized reasons. People have fewer opportunities to enjoy other forms of recreation, they stay at home more, thousands of men and women are spending long hours on “stand by” duties of all kinds,\* they are turning more and more to books for comfort, companionship, encouragement and escape. Millions of others have found new interests and occupations about which they seek to learn more from books. And there is,

\* As a general rule, however, the statistics quoted do not include the use made of books at Civil Defence and other posts and depots, or of issues from libraries for the Forces, etc. These, if they could be assessed, would represent a very considerable *additional* total.

everywhere, a keener interest in things in general, a desire to know more, not only about every aspect of the war and about the peoples engaged in it and the ideas and principles involved, but also about conditions in the pre-war world and the possibilities of the future. It would be a grave mistake to underestimate the part that purely recreational reading has played in maintaining the moral and normality of outlook of the people. But it would equally be wrong to overlook the extraordinary amount of more serious reading that is being done. Without a doubt it is true that the quality of reading has increased even more than the quantity.

The reports of a large number of librarians show that the war has in particular stimulated demand for the following types of books : food and food production, gardening, cookery, household economics ; mathematics ; technology ; books for those engaged in war industries, government trainees, men and women in the Services or about to enter them, those in the various auxiliary services, the A.T.C., etc. ; modern politics, economics and sociology ; the countries involved in the war, their history, geography and general conditions ; recreational pursuits—hobbies, handicrafts and other home occupations ; foreign languages and foreign literature.

The larger technical libraries have been able to give considerable specialized assistance, e.g. to industrial concerns (including those engaged in the production of articles and commodities previously imported), research associations, government departments, and the specialized branches of the Services.

Everywhere librarians have tried their best to meet these demands. Often they have not been able to do all they would wish because of various limiting factors to which we will return. It is, for example, unfortunate both for the library service and for the nation that more than a few, when answering the item in the questionnaire regarding technical books, should have to say that they are unable, for lack of sufficient funds, to meet fully the demands of those engaged in vital wartime industries.

A majority of library authorities have recognized their duty to provide, as far as they can, for this greater demand, and 52 per cent of them have increased their book vote for 1941-2, as compared with their expenditure on books in 1938-9. In 6 per cent there is no change ; unfortunately 42 per cent have reduced their book expenditure. Especially considering the lower purchasing power of the book fund it is to be regretted that so many authorities have not kept pace with demands.

On the other hand many authorities have made substantial increases. In 65 library systems the book fund for 1941-2 has been increased by over 30 per cent compared with that for 1938-9. As will be seen below the increase is often much higher :

Over 200 per cent increase	.	..	..	..	1
„ 150	„	„	.	..	2
„ 100	„	„	.	..	1
„ 90	„	„	.	..	2
„ 80	„	„	.	..	3
„ 70	„	„	.	..	3
„ 60	„	„	.	..	7
„ 50	„	„	.	..	9
„ 40	„	„	.	..	11
„ 30	„	„	.	..	26

Several of these places are small, and elsewhere better book votes were long overdue, but others are large and well-developed services where such increases represent very substantial contributions.

However, without wishing to fail in appreciation of the support of those which have risen to the occasion, or overlooking the difficulties faced by others,

it would on the whole seem that local authorities have not paid due attention to such emphatic and authoritative statements as that made in the House of Commons in July 1940 "that the public library services in Great Britain are regarded by the Government as services of national importance", or the Circular of the Board of Education calling the "special attention of all authorities concerned to the importance of maintaining and, where necessary, extending the Public Library service as part of the measures which the Minister of Labour is anxious to secure for the welfare of industrial workers".

*Reception Areas.* Our first set of major problems arose from that widespread movement of population to which we have become accustomed rather crudely to refer as "evacuation". At the outset of the war large numbers left or were taken from the more vulnerable districts to safer towns and the countryside. Since then this movement has waxed and waned. It imposed a heavy burden upon just those areas which previously had not been called upon to give library service to considerable populations; it created a variety of incidental problems.

Those who left their peacetime districts mostly fall into four broad classes—children, adult evacuees (both those who moved voluntarily and those who lost their homes as a result of air raids), industrial workers who were transferred to their new places of employment, and those employed by government departments, business firms and the like which moved to safe areas.

We are unable to give details of the number of persons thus transferred, or the places to which they went, as this information is of a confidential character. Moreover, perhaps unwisely, many "evacuees" have since returned home and, therefore, figures supplied to us last summer may no longer apply. Nevertheless we can give some general idea of the situation the reception authorities had to face by the following summaries. These show how the total population and the child population of some of these areas had thus been increased.

In 57 representative reception areas the *total* population in 1941 had increased over the 1938 population by the following percentage:

Under 10 per cent	..	..	..	..	..	3
Over 10	..	and less than 20	per cent	..	..	16
.. 20	..	..	30	..	..	11
.. 30	..	..	40	..	..	10
.. 40	..	..	50	..	..	8
.. 50	..	..	60	..	..	5
.. 60	..	..	70	..	..	3
.. 70	..	..	80	..	..	—
.. 80	..	..	90	..	..	—
.. 90	..	..	100	..	..	1

In 57 reception areas\* the child population had increased by the following percentages:

Under 10 per cent	..	..	..	..	..	2
Over 10	per cent	and less than 20	per cent	..	..	7
.. 20	..	..	30	..	..	9
.. 30	..	..	40	..	..	15
.. 40	..	..	50	..	..	6
.. 50	..	..	60	..	..	8
.. 60	..	..	70	..	..	3
.. 70	..	..	80	..	..	4
.. 80	..	..	90	..	..	—
.. 90	..	..	100	..	..	3

\* Not quite the same set of places, as for some we had information regarding the adults, but not about the children, and *vice versa*.

These reception places are of many types—seaside resorts (some since evacuated), medium-sized provincial towns, little country market towns, small industrial townships, quiet rural counties, and so on. Few of them were provided with the stock, staff, premises or the organization necessary to meet the new demands.

These demands have been heavy, for surely the need for books was great. The children and the teachers, deprived of normal facilities, often working under makeshift conditions and with only part-time hours of schooling, needed books more than ever. Adult townfolk, as yet unaccustomed to country life, found their leisure hours almost unbearable unless they could have recourse to reading. The employees of business concerns, government departments, and the like who had used either public libraries or the facilities afforded by various special libraries found the lack of these a serious handicap in many ways. As we have already seen, the industrial workers away from home required not only general literature but information on their new work. All had to endure the discomforts and limitations of blackout and other wartime restrictions.

It is notable that very many of the town children—and their parents—had genuinely acquired an ingrained “library habit”. Their first thought was “where is the library?” and great was their disappointment and loss when the library in their new home had to fail them. Several librarians of counties and small towns comment on the better quality of their evacuees’ reading tastes and of their keenness. They noticed that this often stimulated reading among the country children. It was, and is, indeed necessary to have good library facilities in all reception areas. As one librarian writes “the prolific and intelligent use of the library’s resources by these evacuees and their teachers makes the extra work created by them well worth while”. Another told me—and this opinion was accepted by his Director of Education—that one of the reasons why so many people were returning to the towns was that they could not obtain enough to read and so became restless and bored.

*Library Service for Evacuated Children.* The Library Association was fully alive, before the war, to the situation that would arise when war came, and a scheme was prepared for the transfer of children’s books from the libraries of evacuation areas to those of reception areas. As a result some 250,000 volumes were, in the early months of the war, sent out in connection with this L.A. scheme alone; many other libraries made their own arrangements for despatching books either to reception libraries or direct to their evacuated schools. These emergency arrangements did not by any means completely meet the situation but they did go far to answer immediate and urgent requirements. We must pay a tribute to those evacuation authorities and their librarians who so readily accepted what was a necessary condition—that they gave their books to any reception authorities that needed them regardless of whether or not their own local children were in that area, hoping that their own children would receive similar help from others.

Yet the scheme had its limitations and failures. Too often I have heard it stated by receiving librarians that the books sent out were in very bad condition (a point with which we have already dealt); on the other hand a few receiving librarians did not play their part as enthusiastically as one might have expected; as one said to me recently, he “dished out” the books to the evacuated schools and has been content to leave it at that.

The chief limitation, however, was that the evacuation authorities had not sufficient books to send because nowhere did *all* the children go, and so they had to retain sufficient to provide a choice for those who remained. Moreover (as we have seen already) it takes more books to serve the children when they are divided into many small groups than are needed when they can all visit one or two sizeable juvenile departments. As time went on and the children moved backwards and forwards in increasing numbers this point became more and more

important. Many evacuation towns now need to maintain children's services little less extensive than those of pre-war days, as children, like their parents, are reading more.

It was clearly necessary to put the service on a proper basis so that sufficient books would be available and that stocks should be properly maintained and renewed.

Again the Association early recognized this need, and, with the assistance of the Board of Education, put forward a scheme for grants to reception authorities intended primarily to help libraries during the initial period. The Board was helpful and sympathetic but the Treasury could only be persuaded to make a very small grant towards costs of transport—a grant so small that most authorities did not bother to claim it. We are of opinion that here a great opportunity was missed—not by the L.A. or the Board. At that time books were readily obtainable and demands upon staff were not then such as to preclude the building up of sound distributing machinery. It is not going too far to suggest that had the Government then provided the relatively small sum required the townwards drift would have been much less considerable—and it was then, and we assume still is, the wise desire of the Government that young children *should* be evacuated and remain evacuated.

Evacuation authorities vary in the extent to which they have sought to serve their own children. The debatable issue of who *should* be responsible will be discussed shortly. For the moment let it suffice to note that some have and many have not made it their business to provide for their own children. Sometimes they have given direct service to the schools—though this becomes increasingly difficult with the backwards trend and as evacuated children become absorbed in reception area schools instead of remaining as distinct elements. Sometimes they have helped the reception libraries where their children were served. To give two or three examples:

"A", a large northern city, early sent 10,000 volumes to the libraries of reception areas. To two of these it made grants of 9s. 6d. and 12s. per week respectively towards the salaries of additional assistants; to one place it contributed £35 towards the cost of furnishing a children's room (to which a second evacuation authority also contributed).

"B", a north-western city, sent books to three reception libraries and lent its own children's librarian to one of them; she was only withdrawn when many of the children had drifted back. Apart from the initial supply, between £300 and £400 has been spent on replacing the books lent.

"C" and "D", London metropolitan boroughs, replace all the items originally sent as this becomes necessary, the reception libraries playing their part by undertaking the rebinding.

"E" does all rebinding and—as is generally the tacit understanding—regards the books it sent as a gift to the reception library.

"F", however, found that its children were in an area where the library service was very bad and so, in co-operation with the Director of Education, sends stock to the schools direct. This is done by many other libraries. Often it is the only way of ensuring that local children are served—but it is an unsatisfactory method in that the local library *should* be able to do better, affording a wider choice and more frequent exchanges, with lower transport and administration costs.

These examples, however, disclose the chief elements involved—the question of responsibility, the need for maintenance, and the choice between distribution through the library service and distribution through the educational machinery. In general there has been no dispute as regards responsibility because the progressive reception areas have willingly done all they could and many of the evacuating authorities have either helped them or made their own arrangements. Where neither evacuation nor reception authorities have done sufficient, however,

the point *does* arise. Maintenance of stock is closely connected with the previous factor. If the evacuation authority has accepted the responsibility for initial provision has it equally accepted the duty of keeping it in good condition, or does it look upon its "first-aid" assistance as its full share in a joint duty? In many places this would appear to be the case for, in reception areas, I have often seen stocks from evacuation areas which had long since earned withdrawal and replacement. As for the third point, we cannot but regard recourse to distribution through school machinery as anything but a reflection, deserved or otherwise, upon the library services of the reception areas concerned.

Where provision has been made by reception library authorities (either with or without assistance) it has usually been through the normal local machinery. In general, for example, evacuated children have been allowed to use local libraries and centres. Often the local services have been extended. County "A" has opened 20 additional centres; county "B" established special centres for those unable to reach existing centres or branches; county "C" opened centres at evacuee schools; at "D" the supply at school centres was increased to meet the additional demands. These examples are typical of what has been done in a number of counties.

Several reception areas, both county and urban, willingly increased their local funds for this purpose. For example, at county "E", quite apart from an increase in the county library book fund, the Elementary Education Committee in 1941 made a grant of £1,500 for children's books and the Higher Education Committee a grant of £800 for books for adolescents. At town "F" (50,000 population) the Education Committee increased its normal grant. Large county "G" provided for extra demands by a 24 per cent increase in county book funds; at small county "H" the book fund was augmented by 85 per cent. At other places, however, little effective attempt has been made to meet the situation. Several small authorities report that they are "unable to provide adequately"; one says "juvenile book supplies for evacuees have broken down owing to lack of stock"; at a third library, where juvenile members have doubled, "stock and staff are needed".

*Library Service for Adults in Reception Areas.* Generally local authorities have given adults from other districts the full and free use of their normal local services. As a rule so far as their needs have been of a general character they have been served reasonably well where the pre-war service was good and badly where it was not. This is not quite a glimpse of the obvious. The point is simply that unless the incidence of evacuees has been unusually heavy, the existing machinery of the well-established library has been capable of serving them. There has been a strain on the staff, and the evacuees have had to share with the residents reduced facilities for choice and to accept, perhaps, lower standards of physical condition. Their presence has provided argument for a better book supply but it has not as a rule created any demand for additional branches or centres where this need did not already exist. Thus the good library with a moderate influx of new readers, reasonably well distributed, remained able to give a fair, if somewhat less good, general service. Difficulties arose where the service was already inadequate, where the influx was exceptionally heavy in relation to pre-war population, and where the demand was for special material not normally required in the area. Thus exceptional numbers of evacuees imposed a heavy strain upon certain counties even where pre-war provision was excellent\* and upon good small town libraries where the space and seating accommodation in reference libraries and children's libraries was no longer sufficient. Places to which large government departments emigrated were among those most seriously affected, for not only were the new readers numerous, they were intelligent people seeking a wide range

\* As one such library reports, "6,500 books have been bought in the last four months to satisfy immediate needs, but the shelves are now empty once more".



of literature—and often these places were seaside and inland resorts with a normal population whose interests were not so wide. Again a few authorities rose to the occasion; for example, one large seaside town increased its expenditure by 35 per cent and recruited 4 additional assistants. But others did little; one librarian reports that “the only reaction of the Committee and Council to the situation is to attempt to curtail our already inadequate book fund”.

Frequently, however, the new demand was for technical books needed by workers in war industries, specialists in the Forces and the like. These required material, in large quantities, not previously needed in most of these libraries, material which it was expensive to provide and not easy to select. Here again the familiar pattern is repeated. Live library authorities endeavoured to meet this vital need by increasing their local funds. One reports that “technical books not hitherto in either much demand or supply are now being fairly generously supplied out of income—particularly for workers in the aircraft industry”; another tells of “strengthening of stock on tool manipulation and machine shop practice for trainees in industry”. Resources have been increased by such methods as “using the income usually allocated to the local industry” (in this case cotton—not now the dominant local occupation); elsewhere there has been greater co-operation with works’ libraries and special libraries in the district; in at least one town the library has received a useful gift of money for book purchases from a group of industrial concerns. Several librarians mention the value of the Regional systems and the N.C.L. in this connection, though naturally their help is limited by the fact that such material is in heavy demand everywhere. On the whole, however, too many libraries report inability to provide sufficient technical books for us to be satisfied. If this material is necessary—and there is every evidence that it is—national war production must suffer to an appreciable extent where it is lacking.

The presence of large numbers of war workers creates an additional need for general library provision which has been recognized by the Ministry of Labour. Some time ago the Ministry asked that libraries should, where necessary, provide centres at or near factories, the workers at which had not ready access to ordinary libraries for reasons either of distance or of time. The Ministry indicated that financial assistance would be available. Certain librarians submitted detailed schemes, but so far as we are aware no authority has in fact received any grant from the Ministry. This problem can be a serious one; one progressive county, which has already provided at its own cost a service for government hostels for women munition workers, states that before long over 30,000 women will need such provision.

There is one relatively minor but not insignificant point to mention in connection with adult evacuees. Too many librarians complain that when these move back to their home towns or elsewhere, not a few are negligent regarding the books they have borrowed; they leave them in their billets, mislay them, or take them home. They are often lost to the library, which is put to considerable trouble in trying to trace them. This difficulty arises with troops, perhaps with more excuse as these are often moved at short notice. The general opinion is that evacuees are the worse offenders.

*The Problems facing Reception Authorities.* As we have seen, reception and neutral areas have been faced with new and increased demands for library services. Some have met them reasonably well; others have failed to do so. We must ask ourselves why these have failed, how far failure is due to inability and how far this inability is due to wartime conditions, and how far to inherent general factors equally operative in peacetime as in war.

First, can we find any answer to the question of whose is the responsibility? On general, moral grounds the answer is clear—that it is the responsibility of every section of the community to give what it can to help those in need and to further

the war effort of the country and the well-being of the people in wartime. This answer is generally accepted. On the material question of finance the issue is more controversial. So far as children are concerned one or two county officials say that "in view of the promise of the Government that no expenditure due to evacuation should fall on the receiving authorities, the County Library Committee do not feel justified in asking the County Council to provide the sum needed for library service to evacuee children out of the county rate". If, indeed, such a specific undertaking was given which can be legitimately agreed to cover expenditure on library services there would seem to be a case for a grant from government funds for the purpose, but such grant would necessarily be made to all reception authorities according to their additional burden and not to some only. Moreover it would be necessary to assess such grant on the basis of expenditure for this purpose over and above those costs which an efficient library authority would be expected to provide for its normal local requirements. In practice this would be extremely difficult to do. It would be still more difficult to ensure that the grant did not serve to bolster up local inefficiency and was not diverted to purposes for which it was not intended. In other words it may be possible, if not easy, for a good library authority to say "we are giving a reasonable service to so many of our own inhabitants, and it will cost us so much more to extend that service to evacuees without depriving the existing users of standards they now enjoy"; but it would be quite another thing for an authority to give, on any similar financial basis, an equally reasonable service to the evacuees when its existing service was far below the average, since it could not do so unless it increased its general stock, staffing arrangements, service points and so on—or gave a preferential service to evacuees. It would, in fact, need first to put its own house in order. We are informed that the cost of educating evacuee children is borne by the education authorities of their home towns. Whether this is the right method of financing education it is for others to determine. Certainly it is not a simple method. For example, we were told that one small county with only 100,000 inhabitants had received children from no fewer than 44 different evacuation areas with the education authority of each of which it must make financial adjustments. Even so the parallel is not a close one. In the first place, the teachers employed by the evacuation authority usually went with the children and their salaries represent a large proportion of total expenditure. Secondly, particularly in the early days, it was often possible for expenditure in the evacuation area to be reduced as a result of closing some schools, somewhat in proportion to the extent of evacuation, whereas all library authorities in evacuation areas have been obliged to maintain a full local library service and even to extend it. Thirdly, it is not without significance that approximately half or even more of the expenditure on education is in any case borne by the government, whereas all library expenditure falls upon local rates. Moreover, it is just those evacuation areas which have lost most inhabitants by evacuation of one sort and another who have suffered the most serious decline in local financial ability. Therefore the apparently easy solution of asking evacuation authorities to help reception authorities is quite untenable and impracticable.

Nevertheless, we cannot say that the financial resources of reception areas have been increased proportionately by the influx. Examination of a large number of cases shows that in most reception and neutral places there has been some increase in rateable value since 1938 but nowhere is it remarkable. Here we must not forget two factors—one, that the war has put a stop to the erection of new properties excepting war factories and military or similar establishments, the other that quinquennial revaluations due early in the war were postponed.

We do find, however, an appreciable and general increase in the product of a penny rate. This may probably be attributed largely to a decline in the proportion of "empties" as in most of these districts all available accommodation

for housing, business or industry is fully occupied. The extent of this increase is shown in the following table :

*Percentage increase between 1938-9 and 1941-2 in the estimated product of a penny rate.*

(i) In 67 urban (neutral or reception) areas where the increase is 5 per cent or more :

5 per cent	..	26	13 per cent	..	1
6 "	..	9	14 "	..	1
7 "	..	6	16 "	..	1
8 "	..	6	19 "	..	1
9 "	..	8	20 "	..	2
10 "	..	2	21 "	..	1
12 "	..	2	22 "	..	1

(ii) In 34 counties where the increase is 5 per cent or more :

5 per cent	..	6	11 per cent	..	4
6 "	..	2	13 "	..	1
7 "	..	5	14 "	..	1
8 "	..	4	15 "	..	1
9 "	..	5	16 "	..	1
10 "	..	4			

We would not suggest that the presence of evacuee children, alone, would bring to a reception area any substantial spending power, but undoubtedly this is the case with adult evacuees and industrial workers. Much more money is spent in the area and from this many of the local inhabitants benefit directly and indirectly. We are well aware that owing to increased costs, taxation and the like, these people are not to that extent "better off", but these are factors from which all people, in reception and evacuation areas alike, are suffering. In so far, however, as this increased expenditure locally is generally higher in reception and neutral areas the former places are proportionately better and not less able to meet the cost of library services. We appreciate also that this relative "wealth" cannot easily be tapped by rating authorities since it has little direct influence upon rateable value or the rate product; we recognize, also, that in some reception areas in particular there are many people, such as retired men, with fixed incomes, and who gain no part of the increased spending power, for whom any increase in the amount of the rates may be a hardship.

On the whole, however, we are led to believe that, with a few exceptions, it is not unreasonable to expect reception authorities to provide as satisfactory a library service for their new total population as they were able to provide, before the war, for their own inhabitants. Where they were able to give a good service before the war they are still able; where they were unable before the war the disabilities operative then have not been removed but have instead often been aggravated. Grants to reception authorities could not therefore remove the genuine difficulties unless they were accompanied by thorough reorganization of the national library system; they would be merely palliatives and unless they were universal they would be grossly unfair.

A detailed analysis of the extent to which libraries in wartime have met their new responsibilities shows that it is the well-developed libraries that have been successful and the backward ones that have failed. As we have already suggested, the real question that arose with the war was "what kind of a foundation have we upon which to build, what resources are at our disposal?" To the adequate libraries the war meant the expansion, sudden and extensive perhaps, of work already being done efficiently; to the inadequate libraries it meant the breakdown of an already overloaded machine or frantic efforts at improvisation. When the machine began to break down some of these authorities looked round for help.

Examination of the pre-war standards of those county authorities which applied to the C.U.K.T. for help is instructive. As the following table shows, all but two are authorities which had not before the war given a library service even up to the low average of the country. Of the two exceptions, one is a county which was well above the average but it is too small, has too low a rateable value, and is too heavily overloaded by evacuees to maintain its standards at the same level; note that without any grant these standards would still be much better than those prevailing in many counties. It was because this authority had done so well that it knew how important library provision really is—so here the application was dictated by local keenness, not by local apathy and meanness. This element characterizes the other exception, too. Though here the standard is not so high, as assessed by *per capita* costs, application for assistance followed notable local increases in expenditure.

(i)	8 counties which applied for grant.	Rateable value per capita, 1938-9. £	Expenditure per capita, 1938-9.
	A.	7.1	4.0d.
	B.	6.2	7.5d.
	C.	3.9	12.6d.
	D.	8.4	6.8d.
	E.	4.6	7.2d.
	F.	4.6	4.4d.
	G.	4.5	7.9d.
	H.	4.9	7.1d.
(ii)	4 counties which did not apply for grant.		
	I.	4.8	10.7d.
	J.	6.4	15.7d.
	K.	5.5	14.7d.
	L.	4.9	13.0d.
	Average expenditure in county libraries, 1938-9		8.09d.

One of the questions asked in the questionnaire was this: "Question 3—Emergency Needs—Reception Areas: Assuming it is desired to give to the present total population the same standard of library service as was given to the peacetime population, (a) What additional initial expenditure on books would be necessary (i.e. what increase in total stock is necessary to provide sufficient stocks and reasonable facilities for selection)? (b) What additional annual expenditure on books would be necessary (assuming the initial expenditure mentioned above to have been made)? (c) What additional Headquarters staff would be necessary? (d) What additional branch staff would be necessary?"

Excluding a few places which give a "nil" return, 108 replied to all or part of the question either specifically or generally. In so far as we had hoped to obtain from the replies a reasonable estimate of the additional requirements of libraries in reception areas, the question proved a failure. Far too many replies were so modest as to suggest either that existing standards were lamentably low or that there was lack of real understanding of the problems and opportunities presented by the war. Conversely, in general it was the best libraries that asked for most—because their average costs were higher and because they knew better how much more could be achieved.

The total amount sought for "initial expenditure" was £74,000 and for annual expenditure on books, £30,000; the approximate total salaries of the additional staff requested would amount to about £16,500 for the first year, increasing with increments. Three points emerge. Firstly, it is interesting to note that the figure for initial expenditure is only £9,000 different from an estimate, made by the L.A. office in 1939, of the cost of providing for evacuee children.

Secondly, if we can assume that these demands are legitimate, and if we agree that therefore grants could not in justice be given to some and withheld from others, it is manifest that the total sum involved is more than one could reasonably ask from any Trust, particularly when it is for purely temporary and consumable purposes. Thirdly, it represents only a small fraction of the total expenditure of local authorities on their library services—the initial expenditure on books is equivalent to 2 per cent, the annual expenditure on books and staff together to  $1\frac{1}{2}$  per cent.

*Library Provision in Evacuation Areas.* We have seen early in this chapter that evacuation did not bring with it any serious general decline in the use of libraries in evacuation areas. People have read much more; very considerable numbers have joined their libraries for the first time; there have been new reasons for book use. There have always been so many people left in the towns that approximately normal services were necessary. Often war conditions have called for an extension of services. To meet this demand several evacuation authorities have even increased their expenditure. Those towns which have suffered heavy raiding have, of course, experienced fluctuation in demand, but this has not been anything like so considerable as might have been expected.

These places have been faced not only with heavily increased expenditure but also with reduced rateable value due to evacuation and to war damage. To some extent this has been met by government "loans", in part repayable, and in this connection we would urge that library authorities should not hesitate to provide in their budgets for an adequate library service so that this may enjoy its share of the relief given by these loans.

It is both interesting and stimulating to notice how evacuation authorities, even those which have suffered grievously from enemy action, have sought to mitigate the hardships of their residents.

Among these are the difficulties of "getting about". People do not wish to go far for their books, or to be out after black-out; moreover, longer working hours reduce their opportunities for visiting libraries. It is particularly important that children should not have to go far or be out after dark. This situation has been met in several ways.

(i) *New Branches.* We know of at least twenty-five places—and undoubtedly there are others—where additional temporary branches, shop branches, and delivery stations have been opened for wartime use. Among them are large provincial cities, London metropolitan areas and suburbs, vulnerable industrial districts and coast towns. One large city has opened a small branch and 17 centres and extended its school library service from 55 to 125 schools; another has 6 new house and shop branches. In several instances these new branches and delivery stations are on the outskirts in districts previously some distance from a library.

(ii) *Travelling Libraries.* In one case this is used to serve readers in badly bombed areas and to take books to Civil Defence workers. At another place, which already had a travelling library service, this work has been extended. A third travelling library is used to serve Balloon Barrage personnel.

(iii) *School libraries.* Some libraries have partly dispersed their juvenile stock to the schools.

(iv) *Shelter Libraries.* These are provided in at least fourteen London districts. The stocks, in each case several thousands of volumes, are changed at intervals and were very much used.

(v) *Rest Centres.* At least one London borough and one large provincial city provide collections of books at their Rest Centres.

(vi) *Civil Defence Depots, Posts, Report Centres, Fire Stations, etc.* These are provided with deposit collections by many libraries, or special arrangements are made for the personnel.

(vii) *Hours of Opening.* These have naturally been adjusted to new conditions and to the wartime habits of readers. As a rule evening hours in winter have

for obvious reasons been reduced. Several libraries have, by way of compensation, abolished the previous half-day closing. Elsewhere (12 libraries refer to this on the questionnaire) libraries have been opened on Sunday, with varying success. Some confine Sunday opening to the winter months. Two libraries discontinued the practice as it was judged not to be justified.

(viii) *Extra Tickets.* These are frequently available, or borrowers are allowed to take two books on one ticket. One metropolitan library confines this privilege to elderly people and residents living at long distances from the libraries—we can imagine this being a novel cause of offence—"Sorry, madam, but you are not sufficiently elderly!"

(ix) *Longer periods of loan.* These are also common, 21 days or one month being substituted for the usual fortnight either for all books or for non-fiction only.

(x) *Other facilities.* A few libraries will send books by post to evacuated readers, the borrower paying the postage. Another library reports "considerable modification in its fines system".

*Library Service for the Armed Forces.* The armed forces of today are but a large cross-section of the men and women from whom the pre-war clientèle of libraries was drawn. Their interests remain as varied and their demands as insistent. Indeed they are *more* varied, as the serving man has fresh needs such as technical books. He has fewer ways of spending his leisure other or better than reading. He is keener than ever before to keep abreast with his general and vocational interests so that the war years may not leave him unfitted for the peace. This has been generally recognized by the L.A. and by all librarians and library authorities. The service has been unequal, chiefly because of lack of interest or lack of information about available facilities or the part of the Services themselves or because of the inability of some library authorities, but on the whole an enormous and highly creditable amount has been done to meet a demand which augurs well for the future, coming as it does from the men and women who will bear the chief burden of the reconstruction period.

Books have been provided mainly in two ways—by the official organizations of the armed forces working with voluntary assistance, gifts and funds and government subsidies, and by the public library service itself.

To take the latter first, practically every library authority has granted the full and free use of library facilities to individual members of the Forces who may borrow with a minimum of formalities—e.g. production of the pay book as evidence of identity, the signature of a responsible officer, etc. In one town, the Mayor made a fine gesture by acting as "guarantor" for all Service borrowers. Reading rooms are, of course, open to them everywhere. In several places facilities for writing letters are provided. Several counties have strengthened the stock at branches and centres used by many men and women of the Forces.

Similarly, county libraries have usually extended to individual serving students the use of their normal students' postal services, while many urban libraries send books by post both to readers from other areas and to their "own" readers stationed elsewhere. In certain cases they are allowed to borrow extra books from their home libraries and take them away to their stations.

As a rule librarians have endeavoured to make these facilities known throughout their neighbourhood—by contact with Education and Welfare Officers, circularization, notices, and in other ways. For example, one Scottish county librarian has an arrangement with the W.V.S. Canteen drivers who visit the soldiers in outlying places; the W.V.S. member regularly asks the soldiers what they want, notes their special requirements and takes the books on her next journey; a glance through the list of books and subjects requested was *most interesting* and stimulating. Another, English, county has its own special van—the van provided by Army Welfare, the driver and books by the county—for visiting scattered units.

A considerable number of libraries have sent collections of books to units,

changing them at frequent intervals. Two or three county libraries have established special branches at or near large camps. Large quantities of withdrawn books are sent to those who are less able to visit normal centres and branches—especially to those at balloon barrage, searchlight and A.A. gun-sites and similar small, dispersed elements. A few military hospitals are supplied; at one, where neurological cases are treated, reading is encouraged as part of the treatment. At least one library provides periodicals for service clubs in its area.

There has been much demand for technical books—frequently from libraries which previously had had little call for such material. At several places special arrangements have been made to help soldiers attending technical colleges for instructional courses. Elsewhere books in foreign languages have been specially provided for the forces of other nations stationed in the vicinity. Most librarians report frequent requests from men and women desirous of continuing their vocational studies.

Finally, at many places the library has taken a big share in organizing local appeals for books and magazines for the Forces, acting as collecting and sorting depots, etc.

The distribution of books and magazines other than by public libraries is mainly organized by the Services Central Book Depot. The work of this organization is too well known for any account to be necessary here. Only four points should be made. Firstly, the L.A. has always urged that whereas ephemeral material and books for overseas troops must naturally be distributed widely and without any systematic safeguards, it is a grave mistake so to treat the better type of book in this country. Instead, wherever possible, properly organized and supervised libraries should be established in all camps, stations, barracks, etc., large enough to justify this provision and that, moreover, adequate quiet reading rooms should be provided. All our experience goes to show that, unless there is some reasonable control over books, full use is not secured and wastage is very considerable. This is a very serious matter in view of the shortage of books.

Secondly, therefore, the L.A. has consistently urged that suitable serving men and women should be allocated for these duties. A trained librarian in every area could not only do much in the way of supervising the various unit libraries and in organizing the regular distribution of books to small groups; he could also maintain that close contact with public urban and county libraries which would obviate overlapping, prevent serious gaps in the service, enable libraries to give a better service to more serious readers and, in general, bring the whole book resources of the nation into a planned co-ordinated whole. After long negotiations the War Office recently accepted proposals put forward by the Central Advisory Council for Adult Education in H.M. Forces, and embodying the L.A. schemes, by which a considerable sum could be expended by the Services in payment for loan collections to be provided by public libraries. But it was a great disappointment to find that the War Office had not seen fit to accept what was an essential element—the use of serving librarians as Area and Command librarians. As a result we fear that the scheme will not achieve its full purpose and that much waste will result.

This leads to the third point—that as the incidence of military population bears little relation to that of peacetime population those library authorities which are faced with the heaviest demands from the troops are generally those which are the least well provided as regards stocks and staff. Moreover, these same authorities often have more than the average percentage of evacuees. Therefore we are here strongly in favour of grants from the Services to enable public libraries to continue and extend their work.

Fourthly, we have been struck by the varying extent to which the officers of the Services are interested in and aware of library facilities, and to which they make these known to those in their charge. We have met serving men who are completely uninformed in this respect. Therefore we suggest that further

attention should be given both to informing responsible officers and to instructing these to inform the rank and file. It is not an exaggeration to say that any serving man *can* get most of the books he needs if he (or his C.O.) asks for them. It is very unfortunate and disquieting that so many men complain to us about the service they get—or, rather, do not get. We are too afraid that bad library service in the Forces arises from those same two root causes which create bad civilian libraries—apathy and ignorance.

Before passing to the next section we would mention the excellent work that is being done by the Services Central Book Depot in providing the text-books needed by those who are taking the correspondence courses which are now available in a great variety of vocational and non-vocational subjects.

*Services for other Special Classes.* There is no need to elaborate the following list of other classes and groups for whom various libraries are making special provision, either by establishing centres for their use, lending collections of books, providing special sections and displays at the library premises, granting the use of branches and centres, or giving individual postal services, etc.

*Merchant Seamen*—libraries in several seaboard towns provide regular supplies for seamen on ships using the port.

*A.T.C.*—the School Libraries Section of the L.A. has recently published a bibliography which should be useful in this connection.

*Youth Clubs and Centres*—two or three counties have received special grants from their Education Committees for this purpose.

*Women's Land Army.*

*Foreign Nationals in England*—apart from the needs of foreign troops to which we have already referred, there is in some districts a big demand from refugees and evacuees from other countries for books in other languages. E.g., one London authority has sent small collections to the hostels for evacuees from Gibraltar and has opened a large foreign literature department at its central library. Another library has received help from the Dutch Government in providing for its nationals.

*General factors affecting wartime service.* In this section we may summarize some of the outstanding "internal" factors. In the preceding pages we have briefly discussed the service libraries are giving; now let us consider some of the conditions under which it is being given.

(1) *Staffing.* The demands of the armed and auxiliary forces and of industry have surely created our most serious problem. Very many of our keenest, most capable men and many of our women have been taken, and it has been impossible to find sufficient and adequate substitutes. It cannot be suggested that libraries have not contributed their full share to those aspects of the national effort. As libraries have their own particular and not unimportant contribution to make to the successful maintenance of those amenities which are essential if public moral is to be maintained, as well as helping in more immediate and material ways, we would now urge that no further reductions should be made without a full and serious investigation of the relative value of our remaining female staff as library assistants and as workers in other fields. Quite apart from any other consideration, we would assert that the best use of man and woman power requires the employment of each individual on the work for which he or she is best fitted and best qualified. We have already lost too many qualified people. Those who remain are thus doubly valuable. The L.A. has consistently exerted itself to secure, as far as it could, that this problem was treated by a Ministry of Labour fully informed of all that was involved, but its efforts can be fruitful only in proportion to the extent to which local authorities, throughout the country, themselves regard their libraries as important, make them effective and urge their claims.

(2) *Shortage of Books.* This can be viewed from two angles—(a) locally, where there is an insufficient book vote, and (b) nationally, because of the limitation of supply and the destruction of stocks.



The remedy for the first is now, unfortunately, contingent upon the second. There was a time when libraries could have bought sufficient at least for their immediate needs; now they cannot. As a result "books are working overtime". People are reading more; there are fewer books to give them. The situation is fast becoming more serious as old stocks wear out and cannot be replaced.

We realize that the exigencies of war—shortage of material, labour, and shipping space, and the need for paper in the production of armaments—must limit book production. But we cannot be content to face a by no means impossible future when the most necessary elements of the library service must be drastically reduced because we can no longer obtain enough, or even any, books.

We must not drift with the stream into disaster. We must be urgent and persistent in our demands. There are two ways in which we must exert ourselves: (i) to urge that such paper as is available is put to the best use, and (ii) to prevent the wanton and unnecessary destruction of good books so long as other kinds of paper can be salvaged and so long as new paper supplies are being misused.

Our position will be reasonably secured only when the government is brought to realize the imperative necessity of maintaining an adequate supply of sound reading material.

Let us note the types of books of which we are in most need—sound standard novels, children's books, books of information, the literature of power and inspiration, books for students and workers. These are just the books that are falling out of print by hundreds of titles each month. They are not being reprinted, neither are new editions being published. Instead, a majority of the new publications are books of low value, worthless misleading "war books", trashy novels, and hack work. We cannot agree that even such paper as is being used for book production is being used wisely. When we consider how *other* paper is used our concern grows. A considerable amount of paper *is* being used. Silly and salacious periodicals still thrive. The paper that is used to produce only one Sunday periodical which is devoted entirely to amateurish speculation on the progress of the war, horoscopes, coupons for football pools (repeated in other papers—so there is no need to rob the working man of his flutter), abductions, rapes, suicides and indecent exposures would be more than ample for our total needs. It is said that there is reluctance to make any change in the allocation of paper because it might be regarded as a form of censorship. This idea can be given too much weight. We must surely have a sense of proportion. The amount of paper imported for the production of one week's newspapers would provide ten million books. We ask only a fraction of that total. Can any government seriously doubt which use of this relatively small amount of paper would bring the greatest and most lasting benefit to the nation? If it does not, it must be willing to give us the paper we need and take steps to ensure that it is properly used. The primary responsibility is, however, our own. We must make united representations and we must be prepared to collaborate with the publishers and others concerned in order that, when supplies are made available, the most necessary books are again put into currency. Busy librarians may have over-much to do; if they fail to find time now for this vital matter the day may come when Othello's occupation's gone.

(3) *Binding*. Increased wear and tear resulting from greater use and diminishing effective stocks make more rebinding necessary. So far as it is practicable to rebind a book rather than to replace it, the total demand for paper is slightly reduced. Library binders, however, are suffering seriously from shortage of material and skilled labour. This is, then, another matter in which the Association and all its members must seek the informed goodwill of the government. Further reductions in the staff of library binders will have a serious effect upon libraries and everything for which they stand. Rebinding is only little less important than the supply of new books.

(4) *The additional costs due to the war.* Examination of many library budgets shows that frequently, even though the total is higher than in peacetime, so much is absorbed by costs directly due to the war that the amount available for the essential elements of the library service is not more but perhaps less. This point is mentioned here because it behoves all librarians and authorities to recognize, and so far as possible to allow for, these temporary and extraneous elements. If they do not, there may be an insidious decline in standards of library service; neither will the need to stem this be clearly appreciated.

Even our expenditure on books needs careful examination. Book prices have increased considerably. It is not the amount we spend on books that matters, but the number and quality of those we are able to acquire. For example, if prices have increased by 25 per cent, a total book vote 24 per cent above the pre-war vote is really a *reduced* book vote.

Among the wartime expenses which swell library budgets are payments of salaries to staff in the Forces, fire watching, war damage insurance, A.R.P., etc. Against these increases we must place our reduced expenditure on decoration, fittings, etc. The realistic librarian must keep in mind not merely totals but the real and constant costs of the essentials.

*War Damage.* This is naturally an "interim" report; we sincerely hope that when the final account comes to be written it will be no different. As it is, nearly 80 library authorities have to report damage to some of their premises, often slight, sometimes serious. Wherever it was possible emergency repairs were carried out with highly commendable speed, service to the public suffering the minimum of interruption. Altogether 17 urban branches have been completely destroyed and several badly damaged; 7 central library buildings completely destroyed and 5 very seriously damaged. Approximately 475,000 volumes have been lost. Fortunately a majority of these are "ordinary" books and their ultimate replacement will present no special difficulties. Unfortunately, at the three major disasters—the destruction of Plymouth and Coventry Central Libraries and the Central Lending and other parts of the premises in William Brown Street at Liverpool, there were irreplaceable losses.

Much of value was also destroyed at Hampstead, Chelsea, Shoreditch and Camberwell. To this list of public libraries unfortunately we must add the library of University College, London. King's College (while at Bristol), Birkbeck College, the Law Libraries, the Royal Empire Society and the Guildhall also lost considerably. The British Museum suffered serious losses and a large part of the stock of the National Central Library was destroyed by fire.

At Camberwell no substitute arrangements have been made owing, it is said, "to decrease in population and financial stringency"—explanations not altogether consistent with the practice of other London boroughs. Elsewhere attempts have been made, in two or three cases under great difficulties, to provide temporary services. Plymouth has opened a small library in the adjoining art gallery, Coventry has converted a hall, Clydebank has managed to use part of its building—and so on. It would not be true to say that this is enough, for surely in towns like these which have suffered badly the moral value of a good library service must be especially potent. Thus, while recognizing that the adaptation of premises on any but a modest scale is impossible owing to wartime restrictions, these authorities will be well advised to develop their remaining branches to the utmost and to provide such temporary branches as they are able. In this they have a duty to the future as well as to the present. It would be a tragedy if, because of these losses, the library tradition and habit of book use were to suffer in towns where they had once been well established. We would here put forward the strong recommendation, however, that where library premises have suffered serious damage, the Ministry of Works and Buildings should willingly give consent for any reasonable works to be carried out which are necessary to bring damaged buildings back into commission or convert new temporary premises.

Local authorities should also provide the necessary funds for this purpose, if necessary including them in their "loan" demands.

Up to now we can count ourselves fortunate that we can say that the problem of restocking damaged libraries will not involve any elaborate machinery. Such libraries as Liverpool will, indeed, find it difficult to replace much that they have lost, but I found everywhere in my travels a keen desire among librarians to do whatever they could to help, and it is certain that when the time comes they will readily respond to requests for desiderata. Probably, as things are, a simple system of circulating lists of requirements will meet the case. If, however, further losses occur the L.A. must be prepared to set up a central clearing house. If other proposals in the report concerning the co-ordination of reserve stocks come into operation the task of making good these war losses will be considerably facilitated.

We are, however, concerned regarding the financial aspects of library reconstruction. Apart from any change in the value of the pound and assuming that the agreed valuation will be paid in full, the fact still remains that the sum received will be quite insufficient to replace these buildings even on a basis of pre-war costs. For example, at "X" the Central Library and 150,000 items of stock are now a total loss. The building was valued at £19,000, the fittings at £4,000 and the books at £37,000. A suitable central library for a comparable town cost before the war something in the nature of £100,000. Take another similar case—that of "Y", where the building was valued at £20,000, the fittings at £8,000 and the books at between £22,000 and £25,000. We are not competent to discuss the general principles upon which war damage insurance is based, but it is nevertheless very clear that after the war "X" and "Y" will be seriously prejudiced compared with other towns that have suffered no damage; either they will have to accept inadequate new premises or incur heavy loan charges which may handicap general development. It is perhaps too early, until we know the final story, to consider the best means of overcoming this difficulty; it is one we cannot in justice ignore. Similarly, it is probable that the replacement of stock will cost far more than the amount receivable. Costs will be higher and, moreover, nothing has been allowed for the personnel costs of acquiring and accessioning new stock and the amount will be very considerable. Reorganization of stocks and gifts from other libraries and private sources may ease the situation somewhat; it will remain one calling for special treatment and probably additional grants.

One library authority, that has lost considerable and important stocks, has very wisely opened a special account from which urgently required and especially important books can be bought as and when they can be obtained—for much of the material concerned is out of print and difficult to procure. The sum is additional to the normal book vote and is, as it were, a loan to the library committee for which the council will recoup itself when the insurance claims are settled. This sound scheme enables the library better to meet current demands, to buy essential things while they are still on the market and to get them at current prices which will surely increase later. The objection may be raised that it is courting a second disaster to build up large collections in vulnerable places, but this has not much validity; on the one hand there is nothing to prevent considerable dispersal, on the other the irreplaceable items may be equally liable to the hazards of war if they are not acquired, in which case they are also liable to the depredations of those who heed the call for salvage not wisely but too well. In one respect, however, we do urge discretion. Reorganization of stocks will disclose the presence of much older standard and special material at places where it cannot properly be used (e.g. sets of State Papers, Hansard, etc.) and the large libraries should avoid buying now material which they may later obtain by other means.

*How the war has retarded development.* The general conclusion to which one arrives after a survey of libraries in wartime is that there is little we can do now

except to continue our efforts to maintain the best possible services. There are neither the stocks nor the personnel for any considerable developments or reorganization. We must now endeavour to safeguard our immediate future—by trying to retain adequate women staffs, to maintain the production of necessary books, etc. We must also plan and prepare for the post-war future. The general aspects of development form the subject matter of the main report, but there are certain aspects specifically arising from the war.

*Buildings.* (1) Arrangements must be made for the immediate restoration of full services in places where buildings have been destroyed or seriously damaged. This is a matter preceding any question of rebuilding; indeed if adequate temporary arrangements can be made, rebuilding might well be delayed a little until it can be carefully related to co-ordination (unit) schemes—and in any case it takes time.

To illustrate the point—Metropolitan borough “H” has lost its central reference library and book store as well as a branch. A small substitute branch was quickly provided but an adequate reference library cannot possibly be housed in any premises available now, neither is sufficient labour available—while it will take time for the books to be got together. So it does what it can by improvisation and the loss is not so serious as it might be, as the population is much less than normal (though even so it *is* a serious loss). But as soon as the war is over the full post-war demand will return, suddenly and urgently. They cannot wait three years (or whatever it takes to erect a new building). They must be ready to initiate an immediate transition service. This situation will arise in several places. The responsibility for planning rests primarily with the local authority and librarian, but the L.A. can do much to help by negotiation with the appropriate government departments for priorities, the release of labour and materials and financial assistance. In such cases, too, there might well be priority of demobilization for serving assistants to cope with the work of re-stocking and reorganization.

(2) There will be an enormous strain upon the building capacity of the nation after the war, both to make good war damage and to provide those buildings of all kinds that would normally have been built but for the war. If the needs of libraries are not to be overlooked, and if first things are to be done first, we must again plan now. On the one hand we must present our case for priorities; on the other we must arrange among ourselves a proper co-ordinated programme so that those places which need new buildings first get them first—and these may not all be cases of war damage replacement.

It is unfortunate that the war came at a time when considerable building was either in hand or projected. We have at the L.A. long lists of (a) building schemes (for new buildings and extensions) held up by the war, i.e. schemes that were either started or for which sanction had been given, and (b) inadequate premises—based upon actual statements by the librarians concerned. This list is very far from complete—I could add to it from my own experiences. It can be taken as including only some of the worst and most urgent cases. List (a) includes 14 urban central libraries, 12 urban branches, 4 county headquarters and about 30 county branches. List (b) includes 24 county headquarters and 44 urban central libraries—it is impossible to compute the number of urban and county branches.

*Staff.* We have discussed elsewhere the great need to be ready with a full and thorough scheme for the professional training of ex-service men and others.

*Books.* (1) The problem of making good the losses in book production has also been examined. Here again there is every reason why we should not wait until after the war before conducting preliminary discussions and devising effective machinery co-ordinating libraries, publishers and others concerned.

(2) Shortage of books in wartime and difficulties in rebinding will inevitably cause a reduction in good standards of physical condition. We must be alive to

this, recognizing that for some years after the war book expenditure must be increased for this reason as well as for any other.

There will be so much to be done regarding the reorganization of staff and the rehabilitation of the service that it behoves us, if we are ever to seek a nationally co-ordinated system, to be ready to bring this into being at once so that all our immediate post-war efforts may be directed to this end and nothing done that will need to be undone.











